

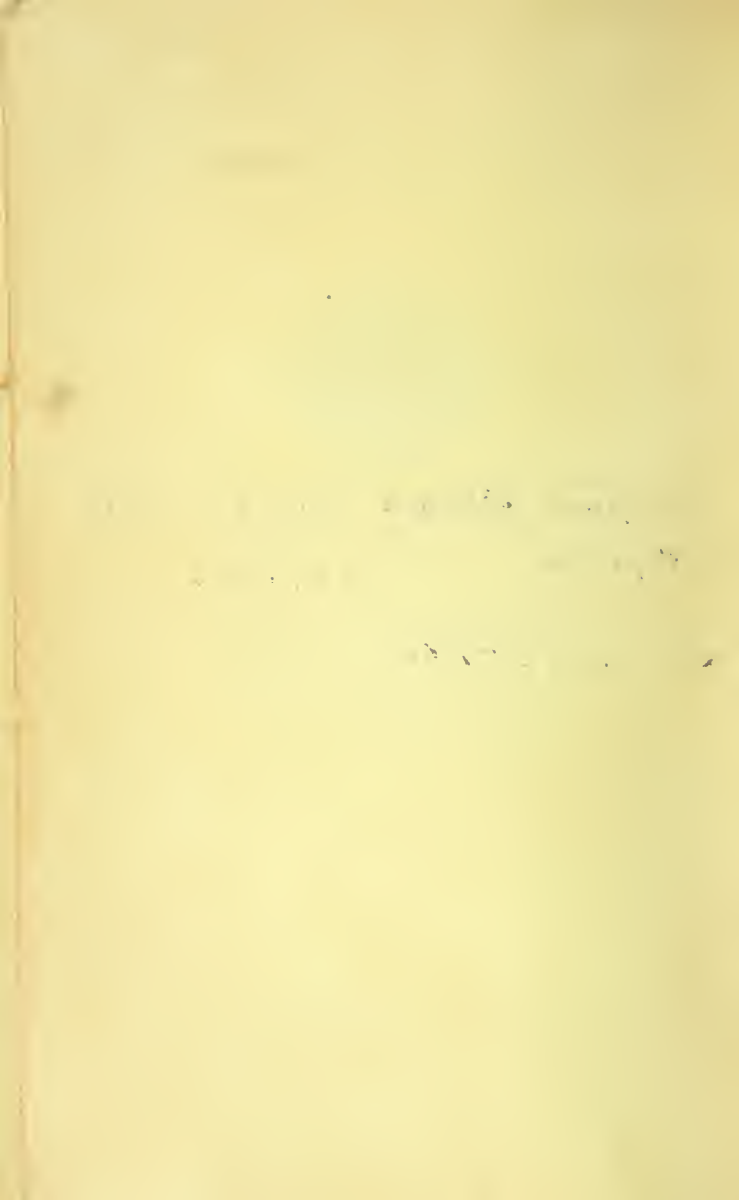




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Josaphine Burdett, from her teacher
and friend, A. E. Park. -

December 25th 1860. -





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LILIAS BIRTHDAY.

(Frontispiece.)

Blind Liliias.

BLIND LILIAS;

. OR,

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.

A Tale for the Young.

BY

A LADY.

NEW YORK:

ROBERT CARTER & BROTHERS,

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INTRODUCTION.

BY THE

REV. CHARLES B. TAYLER.

“**W**HEREUNTO shall I liken the kingdom of God?”
said that Divine and Adorable Redeemer, who
spake as never man spake, and whose every
word is with authority and power. “It is like leaven,
which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal,
till the whole was leavened.” There is a force and ful-
ness in this short parable, which commends itself to
every man’s conscience in the sight of God, as proving
to us, with admirable plainness, the reality of vital re-
ligion. Our blessed Lord addresses His searching, but
quiet appeal, to every one of His professed disciples,
from the most richly endowed to the least gifted among
us. He applies the same test, He demands the same
proof, He is satisfied with nothing short of the same re-
sponse from every conscience and every heart. He gra-
ciously teaches us that something more, nay much more,

than an accurate acquaintance with the doctrines of the Word of God is required in the children of the kingdom; not merely the knowledge of Divine truth in the head, but the transforming power of a new and quickening principle of Divine life in the heart—a spiritual leaven pervading and permeating the whole inward man, transmuting and renewing, by its inworking and sanctifying influence, the thoughts, feelings, imaginations, affections, words, and actions, till the whole is leavened.

In the simple and beautiful narrative now presented to the reader, a female hand has taken the leaven of heavenly principles, with the full acknowledgment of an humble and prayerful dependence upon that Divine hand which can alone impart a quickening influence to the appointed means, and shown us what, by the grace of God, will be the effect produced upon the character and conduct of a child. With an intimate knowledge of human nature, and a charming naturalness, she has brought before us the life-like portraiture of a young and ingenuous girl, affectionate, impressible, and impulsive, but wayward and self-willed, full of warm and generous feelings, but perverse, proud, and passionate, with a mind of superior power, and great intelligence, but headstrong and impatient of control,—a character needing the severe chastening, with which in the providence of God she is

visited, to prepare her heart to receive the heavenly *leaven*. Such a preparation is needed. The leaven is put into the meal,—not among the corn, till it has been brought under the crushing and grinding power of the millstones—for “leaven among unground corn does not work”—the corn must first be ground, and the grinding of the corn is the previous and necessary discipline preparing the heart for the leaven. In the progress of the touching account of the discipline to which this interesting child is subjected, we behold the working of that continued discipline and the working of the inward leaven going on together, till, by degrees, the resistance of the natural and carnal mind is subdued, and the chastening, which at first seemed grievous and not joyous, yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to her who is exercised thereby; gradually the perverse will is overcome, the old corrupt nature renewed, and the youthful sufferer is made a partaker of the Divine nature; and thus the kingdom of God, which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, by the inworking influence of the heavenly leaven, established within. The child of nature becomes the child of grace and walks in fellowship with God.

Such appears to me to be the plan in the mind of the writer of the following pages, and the lively, graphic,

and touching narrative, is the admirable illustration of that plan. I would heartily recommend this little volume not only to young, but to grown-up readers. We may all profit by it.

CHARLES B. TAYLER.

OTLEY RECTORY, IPSWICH,
Jan. 1, 1859.

C O N T E N T S .

CHAPTER	PAGE
I.—COOMBHURST GRANGE.....	9
II.—THE HOPE FAMILY.....	14
III.—LILIAS' BIRTHDAY.....	20
IV.—PRIDE AND PASSION.....	30
V.—THE LITTLE MIMIC.....	41
VI.—THE FATHER'S REPROOF.....	57
VII.—THE BROKEN VASE.....	64
VIII.—LILIAS STRICKEN.....	77
IX.—CHERISHED GRIEF.....	88
X.—NEW] FACES.....	97
XI.—TAKING UP THE CROSS.....	106
XII.—SELF-CONFIDENCE.....	115
XIII.—PRIDE SUBDUED... ..	121
XIV.—THE DORMER FAMILY.....	130
XV.—FRIENDSHIP'S ESTABLISHED.....	141
XVI.—A SUDDEN OUTBREAK.....	151
XVII.—ANGER AND ITS EFFECTS... ..	163
XVIII.—PENITENCE.....	175
XIX.—MAUD'S VICTORY.....	185
XX.—HEALTHFUL PLEASURES.....	195

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXI.—A FRIEND IN NEED.....	209
XXII.—EVERARD'S ARRIVAL.....	224
XXIII.—SANCTIFIED AFFLICTION.....	239
XXIV.—THE SCHOOL FESTIVAL.....	251
XXV.—SADNESS AND SYMPATHY.....	266
XXVI.—GRANDPA FRASER'S STORY.....	274
XXVII.—TRIALS AHEAD.....	289
XXVIII.—AMBITION CORRECTED.....	301
XXIX.—ILL TEMPER OVERCOME	312
XXX.—SEPARATION.....	317
XXXI.—MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL VISION.....	326
XXXII.—MR. GAMBIE'S RETURN.....	333
XXXIII.—THE ANTICIPATED PARTING.	342
XXXIV.—A HEAVIER TRIAL.....	349
XXXV.—LILIAS THE NURSE AND COMFORTER.....	362
XXXVI.—PLEASURE IN NEW DUTIES.....	368
XXXVII.—FAMILY CHANGES.....	374
XXXVIII.—THE VISIT TO MABEL.....	384
XXXIX.—THE SAD RETURN.....	392
XL.—LILIAS AGAIN THE NURSE.....	400
XLI.—CONCLUSION.....	405

BLIND LILIAS.

I.

COOMBHURST GRANGE.

IT is always agreeable to be well acquainted with a neighborhood in which our friends have taken up their residence ; to be able to picture to ourselves the pleasant country scenes, or peopled streets and squares, amidst which they move ; and, in imagination, if not in reality, to share the sights and sounds which occupy and interest those whom we love.

In real life we therefore make a point of visiting our friends in their own homes ; and with the view of keeping up the impressions we have received, we carry away with us sketches of their homes, and, if possible, of the landscape or principal buildings by which they are surrounded. But in books we cannot thus realize the objects which encompass the homes of those to whom we are introduced ; and who for the time being become to us as friends, and draw out our affections and sympathies towards

them, with a power more or less strong, as their characters and the circumstances in which they are placed are more or less life-like, and more or less accordant with our own.

In books, therefore, it is necessary to construct "word-pictures" of the scenes to which we would introduce our readers, and we must consequently draw their attention to places before we bring persons before them.

There is on the south-western part of Devonshire a most beautiful tract of country, varied by hill and valley, coombe and dale, and studded with orchards and pasture lands. Its finely undulating scenery is richly wooded, and rather thickly set with the pleasant and comfortable-looking homes of country gentlemen, interspersed with those even more comfortable-looking dwellings, the homesteads of our English farmers and yeomen.

Along the southern coast of this most delectable land, has of late years been constructed a railroad, and oh, how exquisitely lovely is the scenery of which it affords a prospect to the delighted traveller! Passing from the rich inland country that borders the river Exe, he is almost startled by the suddenness with which a magnificent view of the broad blue sea, with all its thousand glories, opens on him.

If it is a bright day and the time of high water, the scene is indeed most lovely. To the right, the pretty town of Exmouth clusters on a hill, at the opposite side of the mouth of the river, along the margin of which the road has been winding. The red sandstone cliffs which extend from there to near Sidmouth, and then the white ones, which commencing there continue on to Lyme Regis, and beyond it to the east, are all in view; whilst westward, stretches out that exquisite line of coast which includes Dawlish, Teignmouth, and Babbicombe, with all their lovely coves and little bays, the shores of which are richly wooded, even to the water's edge. The two promontories, Hope's Nose and Berry Head, which form the extremities of Torbay, terminate the landscape.

The railroad runs in some parts so near the sea, that, in windy or stormy weather, the spray dashes against the windows of the carriages, and in a fine day the sea birds hover above the water, or dive under, and rise, and float, and dive again, close in sight; and the little pleasure boats and fishing skiffs skim about hither and thither; and the charmed traveller thinks that he never beheld so fair a view, or so enjoyed a railroad trip, when, Heigh Presto! the whole is gone, and he finds himself in utter

darkness! He has dived into a tunnel, and when he again emerges from it he finds an entirely new view of rock, and cliff, and sea. Again he is delighted, and again the fair vision has fled, and darkness and chill vapors alone surround him.

This is the case no less than seven times within about as many miles, and every time that he emerges from a tunnel, a new, but each time equally lovely scene of rock, and cliff, and sea, and ships, like the sudden changes in the dissolving views, awaits him.

And now, leaving the coast, and turning from the immediate neighborhood of the sea, we pass on through a fair inland scene, in sight of happy villages, and hamlets, and pretty old stone churches, encircled by the quiet resting-places of the dead, and at last, through an avenue of stately trees, ascend, by a hilly road which leads through a park-like ground studded with varied forest trees, to a house. It is Coombhurst Grange, the home to which I would introduce my readers. Singular and interesting is the appearance of the house. It is square and large, built of rather dark stone, and with three gables on each side. On two of the fronts are large projecting stone porches, and over that which faces the south is a room, with a deep

oriel window, decorated with richly carved mullions and tracery work in stone.

All the windows are casements, and all set in highly ornamental stone work, but the oriel, which belongs to a noble old drawing-room, fitted up with carved oak wainscoting and ceiling, is far more beautiful and elaborate in its design than the rest.

All the lower part of this house is lightly covered with flowering plants of all hues; and there are innumerable rooks cawing overhead and winging their way to their rookery for the night; and we hear the sound of the deep rolling sea, although we cannot see it. Such are the externals of the house.

II.

THE HOPE FAMILY.

AT the period at which our story commences, the house that I have described was occupied by a gentleman of the name of Hope. He was of Scotch extraction, and had been educated for the Scottish bar; but the health of his wife having required a milder climate than that of her native land, he had thrown up his profession, sold his Scotch estates, and travelled for a time in Italy and the south of France. On returning to England, the mild climate of Devonshire, which was found exactly to suit Mrs. Hope's state of health, induced him to settle there, and he therefore purchased the house and grounds called Coombhurst Grange.

For two or three years after their settlement in Devonshire, Mrs. Hope's health continued to improve; and her husband and children, associated with the beloved wife and mother amidst scenes of such beauty and in so genial a clime, seemed almost to forget the insidious nature of the disease, which had banished her from their northern home.

But that disease, though kept in abeyance for a time, had taken too strong a hold of her constitution to be eradicated, and after giving birth to her seventh child, the little Liliás who is to be the chief personage in our tale, she died. She was a true Christian, and had long felt that this was not her rest, and before she was removed to her better home, she had received the blessed assurance that the long chastening which her illness had proved to her beloved husband, had been blessed to him, and that she left her children in the hands of one who would labor with faithful prayer to bring them to the Saviour who had proved Himself to her "a faithful deliverer."

Of the seven children whom she left, four were sons, and three daughters. Nugent, the eldest, was, at the time of the commencement of our story, passing through his academical course at Oxford; Everard was with a tutor, preparing to join his brother at the university; and Vernon and Edward, two fine boys twelve and ten years old, were at Eton. Of the girls, Maud was the eldest; she was about seventeen, and her sister Mabel some two years younger, and Liliás was nearly nine. All three girls were living at home, the two elder under the care of a lady who had been their gover-

ness from childhood, and carrying on their studies partly under her guidance and partly under their father's; whilst the little Liliás acted the part of pet, playmate, and pupil to each in turn, and stood as fair a chance of being spoiled as any little lady need wish to do.

Maud was tall, fair, and graceful—much like her mother in person, and, like her, richly gifted in taste and intellect. She was an artist by nature, and her powers had been highly cultivated by her father, from whom she inherited the taste for drawing; but music was her greatest gift. The very spirit of harmony seemed to dwell in her, and the rich, full tones of her voice, combined with a peculiarly chaste and delicate taste, gave great charms to her singing.

Maud and Mabel, though as closely united in sisterly affection as it was possible for two girls to be, and inseparable companions, differed as materially in character as in person. The elder was of a grave, rather reserved, and very thoughtful turn of mind, and possessed strong, though usually well-controlled feelings. She was devoted to her father; and the early death of her mother having made her more closely his companion than she otherwise would have been, and devolved on her cares and

duties which do not usually occupy one so young, she had become more matured in mind and character than is usual with girls of her age.

Mabel, on the contrary, was, both in appearance and manners, younger than might be expected at near sixteen. Maud's judgment was sound and good, but she was rather diffident and afraid to act on it ; whilst Mabel was ready in decision and rapid in action ; but, as is often the case with those of quick and eager temperament, she not unfrequently formed hasty judgments and took rash steps, and so got into difficulties from which her sister was called on to extricate her. She was frank and joyous in spirit, "what her heart thought her tongue spoke," and the pleasant musical voice in which she gave utterance to the thoughts of her merry heart added to the attraction which her cheerful spirits and lively manner gave to her. Always vehement and energetic, a new object was sure to occupy all Mabel's thoughts, whether sleeping or waking ; nor could she rest until, by talking or acting, she had given full scope to her imagination, and thrown off some of its first impetus.

Both sisters were alike good and dutiful to their father ; but the extreme impressibility of character of the latter, and the calm thoughtfulness which

distinguished the former, contrasted strongly, and seemed to place a greater distance between the sisters than the two years of age which separated them ; and Maud consequently exercised an influence over her eager and excitable young companion more like that of a mother than of a sister.

Lilias, as we have inferred, held almost too prominent a place in the family. Left, when a few weeks old, to the sole guardianship of the widowed father, she had been considered by him as a peculiar charge ; and as she had been given to him just at the time when his heart first turned unreservedly to Christ, and had begun to realize the joy of fellowship with Him, he had specially devoted himself to the task of bringing up this little one. His elder children had enjoyed the high privilege of their mother's teaching, but Lilias had none but himself ; and, therefore, though in truth without showing any undue partiality to his infant child, he certainly devoted himself to her with such anxiety and watchfulness as was not unlikely to lead her to think herself of too much importance.

Her elder sisters also, and her brothers when at home, made so much of her, and were so apt to contend which should lead her in their walks, and play with her at home—laughingly to dispute for

her kisses, and vie with each other in indulging her every wish—that their father, who was not blinded to the danger she was in, was often obliged to check their unwise indulgence of the little pet, and even seriously reprove them for spoiling her.

The poor child was certainly in a very dangerous position. Pretty, talented in no common degree, and at the same time highly sensitive of praise, fond of admiration, and vehemently passionate, it seemed but too probable that Lilius would become conceited and self-willed, and Mr. Hope, though aware of the danger, found it a somewhat difficult task properly to restrain one who was so beloved and petted by all. He was, however, strongly convinced of the extreme importance to them all that she should be kept in her right place in the family, and he was earnest in his determination to do so. Thus, in consequence of this wise control, the little girl, though at all times in some peril, had hitherto escaped becoming that most disagreeable thing, a spoiled child, and though often taking liberties with her brothers and sisters, and not unfrequently breaking out into uncontrolled fits of passion, she was, on the whole, a tolerably good child.

III.

LILIAS' BIRTHDAY.

THE 21st of July was Lily's birthday; and on the day on which she would complete her ninth year, according to annual custom, a party of young friends from the neighborhood was to assemble at the Grange, to spend a long day; and three or four, who came from a considerable distance, were to sleep, and stay for a few days. The boys were at home, but the elder brothers were enjoying a trip into Scotland, and Miss Colville, the girls' governess, was absent on a visit to her relations, and in consequence the whole party were enjoying a season of holiday. Liliās, at all times a most excitable child, was wild with delight for days before the expected festival. Every toy was pulled out, and underwent a thorough cleansing, and papa was called on to heat his glue-pot, and stick heads and tails, legs and arms, on all the fractured animals that could be rummaged out of their retreat, and nurse to put all the dolls' garments into a wearable state. It was a busy time indeed

in the nursery. What with washing and ironing frocks, re-dressing babies, and grooming donkeys and horses, Lily and nurse seemed to have enough to do. Lily was scarcely considered now as a nursery child; indeed, the name of "nursery" began to yield to that of "play-room," and the little girl rather made a point of its being called so. On this occasion, however, she was too busy to care about names! The idea of playfellows was enchantment to her, and to have several for days together, and to be herself the queen of the entertainment, was more than delightful; for Liliás, like many older people, always liked to be first and most important.

In two of the large fields belonging to the Grange, the hay was not as yet carried, but lay in long ridges, and on the birthday all the little ones were to participate in the joy of helping, or pretending to help, to make it into ricks, which were to be placed as usual in the corner of the field nearest the house. When these ricks were completed, Mr. Hope's hay harvest would be finished, and it was arranged that the harvest supper should be one of the pleasures of the birthday; and, in consequence, all hands were at work from dawn on the 21st, scattering the sweet half-made hay abroad in the sunshine with their prongs, to complete the process

of drying, and raking, and tossing, and raking again. It was a lovely morning, and the boys were out before breakfast with their picks and rakes, well pleased to help in the work, and as Lily looked from her window, before she went to her papa's room for her morning's reading, she was delighted to see the busy men and women at their pleasant labor. Vernon and Edward saw her at the open window, and tossing their hats into the air, scampered towards the house to offer her their birthday greetings. Then Lily went to her father, and received his loving kiss and a few words of affectionate advice, reminding her that birthdays were not to be thought of only as days of special amusement and pleasure, but that they are like the milestones that mark the progress we have made on our way through life, and that we should think seriously at such times, whether we have gained ground in spiritual things, whether we are growing in love to God and obedience to His will. After reading a portion of Scripture together, the father and his child knelt down, and Mr. Hope prayed for special blessings on his little one. Lilies rose from her knees much solemnized ; but her joyous spirits soon recovered themselves, and taking her father's hand she bounded along, skipping and jumping, into the library, where her

sisters and brothers met her. Presents were not given until after morning prayers; but service over the whole party adjourned to the breakfast-room, and there were all the beautiful gifts laid out in order on the table, and a lovely little nosegay on Lily's plate, and vases of exquisite flowers, and plates of delicious fruit, all gathered together to delight the little plaything of the family on her birthday. Lily's heart beat with delight as she went from one pretty thing to another, reading the affectionate words inscribed on the labels attached to each present, hugging and kissing each giver most unmercifully, and then returning to *purr* about amongst her offerings, like a happy kitten over its playthings. The morning was spent by Lily and her brothers in receiving the different parties of visitors, as they arrived one by one, and in exhibiting to each all the various presents that she had received. Papa had given her a beautiful Bible, with maps and references, a possession that the little lady had long coveted, and she was very proud of being now thought old enough to take care of it. Maud had presented her with a magnificent drawing-room for her dolls, furnished in the most tasteful manner, the walls covered with an elegant gold and white paper, and the ground with a beau-

tiful crimson carpet. Then there were chairs and couches, and tables, and a grate, and a fender, and even a little copper coal-scuttle and hearth-brush, articles of use and ornament that called forth almost more admiration than all the rest together. Mabel's gift was a tea-set for the dolls and their guests, and Lily informed her visitors, that they were to "have tea out of them that very afternoon, before they went to the hay field." The boys had given her a pretty new geographical game, with a teetotum and counters; and even the absent brothers had not forgotten her, but each had commissioned Maud to get her a nice book, so she was not only the happy owner of all these playthings, but also of Masterman Ready and Robinson Crusoe, books which she promised to lend to every one, "as soon as she had done with them herself."

The first arrivals were Annie and Rosamond Bright, the children of a neighboring clergyman, and they were soon followed by Mary and Walter Green, with their tiny sister Lina, a little, round, fat thing of five, who had never before spent a day from home without her mamma, and had only been permitted to do so now on Lily's most earnest entreaties that "the darling" might come, and Maud's promises to make the little creature her own especial charge.

All these were, as they arrived, nicely put in order by the nurses who brought them, and then left with strict charges to be very good, and mind every thing that they were told. Lily then took them to her play-room, where nurse sat to attend to them, and soon they were all fully engaged in admiring Lily's new playthings, and amusing themselves with the old. Lily not unreasonably feared the havoc that so many little hands would make in her pretty new toy, and begged that no one would touch it; and she herself set the example of forbearance by standing with her hands behind her whilst they all looked at each article of the furniture. But there were plenty of toys that the visitors were allowed freely to use; and when the little twins Johnny and Josephine D'Urban, and their cousin Gertrude Mavor, were introduced into the room, they found all the other children as busy at play, and making as much noise, as if they had been settled there for a month.

Ernest Graves and his sister, their physician's children, were the next to come; and two or three more little girls who soon arrived completed the party.

"Come, Earnest," said Vernon, "we don't want

to stay here ; let you and me go and see the new puppies, and then I'll show you my pony."

"Very well," replied Ernest, who was a fine lad of about Vernon's age ; "I should like it of all things—come along. Will you go too, Ned?" he added.

Edward agreed to join them, and the three boys set off to the stables ; whilst the younger ones of the party, ten in number, including the little hostess, set about amusing themselves in groups as they best liked. Janette Graves, who was a year older than Liliás, sat down on a low chair to examine Lily's dolls' drawing-room, and Mary Green with her. The other younger ones were delighted with loading a toy wagon, and making the wooden teams draw it round and round the room. Johnny D'Urban and Walter Green pretended to be millers, and played at buying the sacks of flour that the wagoners brought ; and Gertrude Mavor relieved Maud from all anxiety about little Lina, by taking her under her special care as her own child for the day, and was now playing nursemaid for the little one's dolls.

Lily, seeing that all the boys and younger children were safe at play, now relaxed her authority over the drawing-room, and she and the two other

little girls were soon busy enough in full play with the pretty new toy, placing and replacing each separate piece of furniture, and admiring every article, as they carefully examined it, as emphatically as Lily could desire. Liliás was very good and very happy. No one interfered with her own peculiar pleasures and prerogatives; and Maud, when she looked in on the little ones, was delighted to see her behaving as a little hostess should to her guests, and all going on so very satisfactorily.

Liliás had been so little accustomed to have any one with whom to share her amusements, or who was likely to interfere with her will, that she scarcely knew how to behave with other children. Those who have little brothers and sisters are, of course, often called on to yield up their own wishes to those of others, and to share everything with the rest; but solitary children such as Liliás, from having no one to claim a share in any indulgence, or to take turns with them in any amusement, are very apt to become selfish, and desirous of ruling the others, and of engrossing everything for themselves; and hence arose Maud's fear as to whether the little girl would behave pleasantly towards her companions.

Long before the children were inclined to leave

their play, the first dinner bell rang, and the nurses called their little charges to be put neat before they went down stairs. Gertrude would not give up Lina to any one. She said it was "her child," and would let no one but herself brush the little one's hair, and wash her hands, and then she led her down, choosing to hold the office of nurse and playmate herself, so that the two, the youngest and the eldest of the little party, for Gertrude was twelve years old, became wholly inseparable companions.

There was an elegant dinner laid for the little party, and all were so sober and dignified in their demeanor, when they entered the dining-room, that no one could have imagined it was the same set of children, who had but lately made the house echo with their mirth and play. They were all now conscious of the honor of dining out, and of the importance of being on their very best behavior. Besides this, some, if not all of the party, were rather shy and frightened, and would have found it rather difficult at first to utter a word. Liliás was seated at the top of the table, a dignity reserved only for birthdays, and Maud sat by her, to help her in her office of president. Little Lina sat by Gertrude, who cut her dinner for her, and helped her constantly, though by so doing, she left herself

but little time to enjoy her own meal. "Miss Mavor," said nurse, "do please to let me 'tend upon the little one ; you'll let your chicken get quite cold." But Lina pouted, and said "No ;" so Gertrude said "No," too ; and thanking nurse, said that she had undertaken the care of the darling, and did not mind a bit about her dinner. The meal over, a game of play on the stairs commenced, and hide-and-seek, battledore, and genuine romping of all kinds followed, for about an hour. Mr. Hope then called the elder ones into the library, and showed them some prints, whilst the little ones proceeded to the play-room, to take tea out of the new tea-things ;—a mere play tea, for the proper meal was to be partaken of in the hay field two hours later, when the sun was a little lower, and the air less heated.

IV.

PRIDE AND PASSION.

“**W**HAT shall we do next ? ” said Edith Gay, a merry, romping girl of ten years old, when, after having a little exhausted their spirits, by running and jumping over the hay, burying each other in it, and playing all sorts of tricks, they at last came to a pause. They now stood all together in a group under a large tree by the stream that ran through the meadows.

“ Yes, what shall we ? ” joined in two or three voices.

“ Let us try who can jump over the stream,” said Walter Green.

“ No, no ! ” said Lillas, “ we girls can’t do that ! ”

“ Cannot we have some lines, and fish ? ” asked Ernest.

“ *Fish*, Graves ! who ever saw a fish in a stream like that ? No, that won’t do,” answered Vernon.

“ Well, then, I’ll tell you, Vernon,” replied Ernest ; “ let us all get into that wagon and drive round the fields.”

"So we will, so we will," exclaimed the children.

"But we must not without leave," suggested Edward; "I will run and ask Williams;" and off he ran and soon returned with the desired permission, and followed by Williams to help them manage the horses; and in a very few minutes a dozen or more of merry creatures were seated on the soft hay, of which the wagon was half full, urging on the great horses to trot, and shouting at the top of their voices, utterly regardless of the jumbling that ensued, as the wheels jolted over the drain courses which crossed the fields in every direction. Gertrude and Lina were not of the party, but sat under a tree playing with flowers, for the wise and motherly little girl was afraid to trust her young charge in the crowded wagon, and Gertrude never thought of her own pleasure when it seemed to interfere with either the pleasure or the good of others.

"Let me go too, Toodie," said the little thing, jumping up, as the merry and noisy party passed by the spot where they were sitting, rattling along and waving their hands and handkerchiefs.

"No, darling, Toodie cannot let you go; Lina is too little," replied Gertrude.

"But you're not too little. Why don't you go,

"Toodie?" asked the child; "you could take care of me. Do go, it is so funny!"

But Gertrude, true to her charge, would not be persuaded, and when, on their next round, the boys stopped the wagon and begged her to come in, she still steadily, but with the most perfect good humor, declined, and continued to devote herself to her little playfellow's amusement.

All the children in the wagon enjoyed the sport exceedingly. On they went, over rut and hillock, hay mound and drain course, Williams running at the head of the horses until, exhausted by his efforts, the poor man stopped to rest a moment. Then Vernon and Ernest clambered over the front of the wagon to the shafts, and thence to the backs of the horses, where they seated themselves in triumph; and as they did so, Miss Lily, ever foremost in frolic, seized the extempore reins, made of a piece of cord which Williams had tied on for them, and the whip which Vernon had abandoned, and began to slash about her, and urge the horses forward with whip and voice. For a little while nothing was to be heard but shouts of mirth and laughter, but then Liliás, not content with a moderate exercise of her authority, began slashing at the horses with all her might, and not being either very

skilful or very careful, her brother and his friend came in for a share of the whipping.

“Hallo!” exclaimed Vernon, angrily; “who is that slashing me with the whip?” and turning around he soon discovered who was the culprit. There stood Lillas, her hat thrown off, her long curls flying about in wild disorder, her face scarlet with heat and excitement, waving her long whip about in the air, shouting at the top of her voice, and gesticulating more like a great boy than a young lady.

“Lillas!” he exclaimed, “for shame! put down the whip and reins directly, you naughty child—you had no business to take them; a child of your age attempting to do such a thing, indeed! Put down the whip,” he reiterated, seeing that his sister was not disposed to obey his command, “or I’ll make you.”

Excessively annoyed and angry at Vernon’s dictatorial manner, and at his calling her “such a child,” Lillas replied in a pert and disagreeable manner, that she should not do it for his bidding, and that he was but a child himself. On this, her brother, who, having been two years at a public school, had a most supreme contempt for girls, especially little girls, and by no means thought

himself a child, became very angry, and seeing that Lilies again triumphantly flourished the whip, and gave the horses another cut, he called to Williams, who, being at the head of the horses, knew nothing of what was passing, to stop, and as soon as he had done so the young gentleman scrambled from the horse back into the wagon, exclaiming, "I'll *teach* you."

Lilies, who was a little afraid of her brother, and perhaps rather alarmed as to what sort of *teaching* he might have recourse to, sprang away, and Vernon pursuing her to the back of the wagon, she suddenly overbalanced herself and fell over the low tail-board to the ground, a little more hastily than she quite liked. Of course she roared lustily, but whether with wrath or pain the party in the wagon could not decide. In an instant Vernon leaped down, and was at her side. To his great satisfaction he found that she had fallen on a heap of hay, and had probably received no injury ; but his anger had rapidly changed into sorrow and compunction when he saw her fall, and he now affectionately, and with many apologies, tried to raise her up.

But the young lady would not be mollified, and, as is wont with passionate children, she continued

to lie on the ground, kicking and screaming, and looking the very picture of naughtiness.

“O Lily,” he said, half frightened at her violence, “do get up, and not cry so. I had no idea of hurting you, and I am so sorry !”

“You pushed me out, you naughty boy—you did. You did it on purpose to kill me, and I’ll tell papa, and then you’ll see what he will say to you,” sobbed the naughty child, renewing her screams and kicking.

“No, Lily, nonsense,” replied Vernon ; “I did not push you—it was you that overbalanced yourself in pushing me back. But come, Lil,” he added, “make it up and be friends—I am very sorry I was rude and cross. Come, darling, you are not hurt ; let me help you up again, and you shall drive if you like, and whip me too if you will ; but don’t let us spoil every one’s pleasure so, and on your birthday, too.”

But Lily would not be entreated. She said she was hurt, and would not get into the nasty wagon again, nor have anything to do with such rude, disagreeable boys ; and seeing that several of the children, who had now descended from the wagon and stood round, were rather disposed to smile at her absurd appearance and expressions, she suddenly

sprang from the ground in a fresh access of passion, saying, "And instead of pitying me, you are laughing at me—a nice set of friends you are, to be sure!" and turning suddenly, she flew across the fields into the house, where she was found an hour after seated in the nursery in sullen dignity.

And so Lily's happy day was spoiled. The other children had tea and junket, and strawberries and cream, in the hay-field. They saw the ricks completed, and had the pleasure of seeing all the workmen and their wives and children enjoy the hay-harvest supper at the farm-house; but Lily, poor child, though not under sentence of punishment (for her father, who, for a long time, had not heard of her ill conduct, had left her to herself, and taken as yet no notice of it), could not prevail on herself to rejoin the party, but sat alone, sullen and angry, though several of her little friends kindly came to seek and try to soothe her.

It is sad indeed to see how often our own tempers stand in the way of our happiness. Every indulgence and pleasure that a little girl could devise, had been provided for Liliās, and nothing hindered her enjoyment save her own pride and passion. But pride, cherished in the heart, is enough in itself to destroy all comfort and enjoyment—a

single word or look will wound a proud spirit, when an humbler one will pass many by, if not without notice, yet without feeling hurt. The child who begins to give way to bad feeling and passionate actions, never knows when she will stop. The Scripture says, "The beginning of wrath is as when one letteth out water; therefore let alone strife, before it be meddled with." I have heard children say, "But I can't help being in a passion, it comes on me so quick that I can't stop it."

My children, this would not be so if you habitually tried to remember Him who was once a child like yourselves—to think of Him who was meek and lowly in heart, and try to be like Him. The best recipe I can give to any one who is subject to fits of anger, and to be "easily provoked," is to pause a moment before you take notice in words of anything that offends you, and lift up your heart to God in this short prayer—"Father, help me, and make me patient and humble like Thy dear Son Jesus Christ." If you pray thus with all your heart, and then try to act in conformity with your prayer, you will spare yourself many a sorrowful hour, and your parents and friends many a troubled thought. Above all, I would add that you will spare your Saviour the grief of seeing any little

one, whom He would fain call a lamb of His fold, acting like a little savage heathen child who never heard of God or His holy Son.

Lilias knew better than she allowed people to suppose. She knew that she had offended God, and disgraced herself in the sight of her little friends. She knew also that she had been the means of spoiling much of their enjoyment, and that she owed them all the reparation she could make, and ought to ask all their pardons, and try and do all she could by kind and gentle behavior to make amends to them ; yet, poor child, she could not at present make up her mind to do this, and consequently she sat in her solitude until her father came to seek her, and finding her still unsubdued and sullen, he desired nurse to give her some tea up-stairs, and then to put her to bed.

Her punishment was of a salutary nature. Left to her own reflections, though at first inclined to lay the blame of her fault on any one rather than herself, and to rebel against that kind father who had sentenced her, and nurse, who, when she brought her some refreshment, tried to lead her to a better state of feeling, yet as time went on Lilias began to see with clearer eyes, and to be conscious how much she had been to blame. In consequence of this,

before she went to bed, she was able to beg that her papa would come up, and when he did so, to confess her fault to him and ask his forgiveness.

"But there is One whose pardon you ought to ask before mine, dear Lily," said Mr. Hope; "have you asked Him to forgive you?"

"No, papa," replied she; "I have not seen him, and I don't think I ought to ask his pardon. It was all his fault in the beginning, and I think he ought to ask mine."

"I did not speak of your brother, my dear," answered Mr. Hope; "but as you name him, I must just say that I do not think it was all his fault, even in the beginning. Besides, if I am not misinformed, Vernon did ask your forgiveness, and say he was sorry, and ask you to be friends. But my naughty and passionate little girl refused to forgive her brother. Now it is your place to ask his pardon. Do not you think so?"

"Yes, papa," said Lily half aloud.

"But, dear child, is there not One of more importance than either I or Vernon, whom you have offended by your wild passions? Let us kneel together and ask Him to pardon you, and then perhaps you will feel better able to send your brother a message of love by me, and meet him in the

morning as a little brother and sister should meet."

Lily and her father knelt together, and Mr. Hope, in simple language, such as his child would feel and understand, offered a short confession of sin, and prayed the God of all love and mercy to pardon her, and give her a new heart, and grace hereafter to walk in Christ's ways; and, when they rose, Lily's heart was softened, and her pride gone, and sobbing on her father's breast she humbly confessed that she had indeed been very naughty, and sent a loving message to Vernon, and "good-nights" to her young friends, and then with a heart more at peace than it had been for many hours, the little girl laid her head on her pillow, and was soon fast asleep.

V.

THE LITTLE MIMIC.

LILIAS woke the next morning with rather a heavy heart. She did not quite like the idea of coming into the presence of those who had witnessed her misconduct, nor could she quite make up her mind what to say to Vernon, nor exactly decide as to what she should do in other respects.

After nurse had left her, and she had said her prayers, and read her morning chapter in the Bible, she therefore lingered a little, looked out of the window, and then stood irresolute for a moment. At last, feeling like a wise child that the time must come, and that matters would not be made better by delay, she boldly opened the door, and was proceeding on her way down-stairs, when, to her great surprise, she saw Vernon standing at the staircase window. He had been waiting for her to appear, and was the first to say how sorry he was for what had happened; that he knew he had not been kind the day before, and was quite ready to take the

blame on himself. But Lily said, "No, it was, most of it, her fault," and asked him to forgive her; so then they kissed each other most lovingly, and walked hand in hand into the library where all were assembled for morning prayers.

When the little twins and Gertrude saw that she and Vernon were friends, so far from laughing at Lily, or as she had feared, looking unkindly at her, they all ran to her and kissed her, and not a word was said by any one in reference to yesterday, and consequently in a few minutes she was again quite happy and as full of play as any of the party.

The morning of the day after Liliass' birthday was lovely, and the little girls enjoyed, each in turn, a ride on the pony on the soft grass of the field, whence all the hay was now cleared away; and the boys, meanwhile, took a walk with Mr. Hope. But at about twelve the day became overcast, and a thoroughly wet afternoon set in, precluding the possibility of any more out-of-door amusements, so that the little visitors were obliged to content themselves with home occupation. Vernon and Gertrude began a long game of battledore, and their merry voices might be heard the house over, counting their number of strokes, and laughing as now

one, and then the other, made false strokes, and let the shuttlecock fall to the ground.

Johnny D'Urban and Edward Hope settled to drawing; the former copying a landscape of his sister's, whilst the latter diverted himself with sketching a strange wild procession of animals—cats riding on rats, foxes on camels, hens on cocks, with the bridle in their beaks, etc., etc., while the whole air above was filled with cats, dogs, and other animals, riding at full speed on eagles, geese, and other birds. He was a child of considerable powers of mind, and possessed of a remarkable degree of fancy and imagination, so that he not only amused himself, but Gertrude also, who sat by him after her game was over, laughing at the odd conceits that he produced so rapidly.

Lilias and Josephine, who were of about the same age, amused themselves with Lily's dolls, of which she had an immense number of every age and kind. First the whole party, wooden and wax, girls and boys, were elaborately instructed in every branch of learning in which either of the little girls had been accustomed herself to be exercised. Several of them were, of course, stubborn and naughty; and then they were disciplined, and reproved, and punished, but we must confess, with a greater de-

gree of severity, and for times of far longer duration, than the little teachers themselves ever experienced. Lessons over, the whole party were taken for a walk, Liliás playing mamma, and Josephine nurse. After this it was discovered that one poor little creature called Willie—a doll of that species that turns its head, and makes a kind of barking noise—had a dreadful cough. It was pronounced to be whooping-cough, and poor Willie was made to keep on coughing, while the little nurses with motherly assiduity, proceeded to undress him, and lay him in the cradle.

“We must fetch the doctor for the poor darling,” said Josephine—“mamma did when baby had it;” and off she ran, begging that Johnny, who held the office of family physician to the inhabitants of doll-land, would come immediately, and prescribe for poor Willie—a call that Johnny was quite willing to obey. Gertrude came with him, and Ned, finding that the drawing party was broken up, soon followed them. Johnny, who, from baby’s recent treatment, was well up in the symptoms of, and remedies for, the complaint, ordered that Willie should not be kept in bed, but must on no account go out of the house; so then the little nurses took him up and dressed him again. Then Johnny pre-

scribed certain oils to be rubbed into the chest, and other alleviating measures, kindly undertaking to superintend the application of the oils. Ned offered his assistance in fetching medicine from the chemist's, whilst Gertrude undertook to amuse the other doll little ones, and keep them out of the way; consequently, the whole party, boys and girls, were soon so busy at play with the dolls as to be quite sorry to hear the first bell summoning them to prepare for dinner, and agreed that they would return to their play as soon as possible after dinner.

When the little playfellows returned to their young family, they found that Willie's cough was no better. "Worse, indeed, poor child," Lilius said, and most certainly he did make a most strange and alarming noise. Moreover, it was discovered that several more of the dolls had symptoms of the same complaint, and required attention.

After applying their remedies very freely, Johnny and Edward undertook to get up a show for the amusement of the invalids. For this purpose all the toys and pictures that could be mustered were set up in semicircles, and a stage built with bricks in the centre, on which were placed all the dolls. About twenty of different kinds and sizes, from Lily's beautiful wax baby to the humblest little

Dutch damsel, were placed on this ; and Edward with a long stick in his hand, took on him the office of showman, and described all the wonderful things before them in a loud voice, interspersing his descriptions with all sorts of fun and nonsense ; whilst Gertrude, Johnny, Lily, and Josephine, grouped behind the stage of dolls, amused themselves in making small speeches and merry laughs, in all sorts of doll-like voices, to represent the remarks of the tiny people for whose amusement the exhibition was supposed to be got up.

All, little and big, were enjoying themselves most heartily, when the sudden appearance of Maud and Mabel, who, attracted by the sounds of mirth, came to see what was going on, almost broke up the fun. Poor Edward and Johnny were shocked to be found thus playing with the girls and their dolls, but the elder girls so much admired the show, and so carefully refrained from anything that might look like disrespect to the exhibition, that they were soon re-assured, and the fun went on with unabated ardor, until nurse summoned her little charges to be dressed.

New pleasures were found for the evening, and the day passed off so pleasantly, that all the children agreed that they hoped it would be wet to-

morrow. Liliás had been so much subdued by the events of yesterday as to be quite a different child in her demeanor. Gentle and yielding, and full of concern for the pleasure and comfort of others, she had herself found abundant enjoyment, and she told nurse when she went to bed that she never had been so happy, and she meant to be always good.

The desires of the children for a wet day were fully gratified, for the morning rose with such a clouded sky, and such heavy rains, that there appeared every prospect that none of the party would be able to get out of doors that day. The time did not, however, pass so pleasantly as the day before; the home resources had been in some measure exhausted, and, besides this, Liliás had begun to forget her good resolutions, and had been rather cross and pettish. Josephine wished to play with the dolls again, and Lily had set her mind on a game of battledore with Johnny, and would not give it up, and then the little girls were very near quarrelling, and would have quite done so, had not Gertrude, who was always watchful for opportunities of pleasing and helping others, and ready to give up her own pleasure, if by doing so she could minister to that of others, goodnaturedly left her employment, and gone to play at dolls and doctors

with the little girl. All, however, went on pretty smoothly until after dinner. Then the long confinement to the house began to tell, and the children all became rather dull, and some of them rather contradictory. Lilies had a pretty kitten called Tiny, of which she was very fond. Josephine wanted Tiny to lie on her lap, but Tiny had a will of her own, and springing off Josephine's knee, climbed up Lily's frock, and established herself on her shoulder, and then began to pull at Lily's curls, and comb them with her claws, as she was accustomed to do. "Of course she will come to her own mistress," said Lily, stroking the little creature, "of course she will; I should not love you a bit, Tiny, if you did not love me the very best of all in the world."

"Oh, 'of course' indeed," replied Josephine, pettishly. "Of course she does come to you, because you coax her away from every one else, and it's only because you feed her. If I had milk or meat, I would soon get her back."

Lily fired up: "You would not; you would never get her away from me. If you were to feed her all day long, she would not love you. She loves me though, pretty dear," added she, caressing

her little pet; "and I never feed her, or scarcely ever. Stupid little thing you are, Josephine!"

"Lilias!" said Maud.

Lilias blushed, and looked ashamed. Her sister's glance had reminded her that she had resolved not to be selfish any more, nor to try always to be first. It brought to her mind those better feelings; and taking the kitten gently from her shoulder, she placed her in Josephine's lap, saying as she did so, "I didn't mean it, Josephine. You shall have her. I'll soon make her stay with you;" and stroking her little favorite she soon got her to settle on Josephine's lap, and showing her friend how to please the little purring pet, by rubbing its throat, and letting it lie without holding it so tight as she had before, she soon had the pleasure of seeing Tiny at high play on Josephine's lap, and needed not Maud's affectionate glance of approval to give her the higher pleasure of feeling that she had conquered *self*.

Maud, seeing that the children were getting weary of the long day, now proposed that each one should do something in turn to amuse the rest—either to sing a song, or tell a story, or ask a riddle, or anything else they chose. This proposal was highly applauded, and it was decided that the eldest should begin. Vernon, therefore, sang a merry

comic song, with several amusing changes and gesticulations to suit the subject, which made them all laugh exceedingly. Maud had been called away, but she promised that she would come back and give her contribution at the end. Gertrude's turn came next. She chose to tell a story, and all sat round and listened with breathless interest, whilst she very prettily repeated a story of some French emigrants, which she had lately read, in which the children of a noble family had been reduced to such necessity as to have been all obliged to go out as servants, some of them in the lowest capacity ; and as she told of their toils and of the efforts they all made to maintain their poor parents by their labors, her little auditors were all so full of sympathy that the girls almost wept.

But Edward's arithmetical question, which came next, was of so puzzling and amusing a character, that the pathos of Gertrude's story was soon forgotten. Edward's question was this :—"A woman went out to sell some eggs. To the first person she met she sold half she had and half an egg ; to the second, half she had remaining and half an egg ; to the third, half she had then remaining and half an egg. At the end she had one egg left, and she had not broken or otherwise divided one egg in the

course of her sales. Query, How many had she in her basket when she began?"

This was a puzzler indeed. Vernon thought and pondered over it, but did not speak. Lily guessed at random, "Six—nine—four?" Gertrude saw at once that none of these numbers would do, but could in no way find out what would. Josephine followed Lily's example, and guessed all sorts of numbers without having any reasons for naming one more than another; and Johnny quietly said, "It can't be true; she could not have sold people half eggs three times over, and yet not have broken one, and so I shan't try to find out what can't be. You must have mistaken the riddle, Ned."

But Ned, chuckling over his very successful attempt to puzzle them, would only assure them that he was quite right, and so they would see when they knew the answer. Many numbers were tried and rejected, for the puzzle of the half eggs baffled them all.

"Shall I tell?" asked Edward.

"Yes, do," said Gertrude, "I can make nothing of it."

"It's all nonsense," said Master Johnny, "*I* have not tried."

"And you would not have found out if you had, old boy," said Edward, laughing.

"Come, Ned, tell," said Lily; and Josephine too said, "Yes, do, tell what it is." But Vernon, who had for the last few minutes been so busy with pencil and paper, that he had not heard what was passing, now interposed, "Tell; no, certainly not, don't tell, Ned. I almost have it, stop a minute;" and, completing his calculation, he exclaimed, "I have it; she had fifteen!"

"Yes, to be sure," replied Edward. "Now, Master Johnny, I have been longing to convince you. Don't you see now?"

But Johnny did not see. He was old enough to perceive the difficulty, but not to discover the way of obviating it without some explanation. So Vernon set himself to make the matter clear to the little ones, all of whom were eager to make out the meaning of the answer. "Now attend,"—said Vernon, "and think—how many is half fifteen?"

"Seven and a half," said Lily.

"Well, you know she sold to her first customer half she had—that is, seven and a half—and half an egg."

"I see," said Johnny; "and that made eight, and then she had seven left. That's capital."

"Yes; and then the next customer had three and a half and the half egg made four, and the last had

one and a half and the half made two, and then she had one left," continued Vernon. All were delighted, and, of course, after the explanation all understood.

And now it was Lily's turn, as, on comparing ages, it was proved that she was a few weeks in advance of the twins. In an instant Lily was on her feet. She threw back her head, half closed her eyes, and began to strut up and down the room in a droll manner, saying several sentences, one after the other very rapidly, and ending each with, "Eh ! don't you think so, ma'am ?"

Two or three voices exclaimed at once, amidst bursts of laughter, "Major Edwards. It's the Major himself—how well you do it, Lily." Then Lily changed her whole manner—got on a chair, and with a low, snuffling voice and droning manner, and wrinkled-up face, proceeded to imitate some one preaching a sermon. "That's Mr. Scott," exclaimed Vernon. "Capital, Lily ; now do old Mrs. Swenzer."

But Gertrude looked grave, and said, "No, Lily ; it is not right to mimic people. Papa used to say he thought it very wrong and unkind to turn people into ridicule. Don't do it, dear."

"Nonsense ; I am not ridiculing them," replied

Lily. "I am only taking off their manner, and making you guess who they are. I wish you would not be so fussy. There is no harm in it."

"It's because Gerty can't do it herself," said Johnny, who had been excessively delighted at Lily's performance. "She can never imitate anything; she can't crow like a cock, or bray, or cackle, nor make any noise like animals; when my turn comes, I'll give you all the barn-yard noises fast enough. I have never tried to do people, but I shall, and I dare say I shall do it very well. Do go on, Lily."

"I do not think my uncle will let you, Johnny; you know he does not like such things," said Gertrude.

"Well, Lily, you know papa himself dislikes all sorts of mimicking and ridiculing people, and has often told you not to do it," said Vernon.

"Well, never mind," replied Liliass crossly; "surely you need not interfere. You did not say a word, and told me to go on, until Gertrude objected."

"Because I forgot," replied Vernon. "If you choose to go on you can, but I shall not listen;" and, walking towards the table where Gertrude had

seated herself, he withdrew from the part of the room where the little mimic was performing.

But Lilius was so elated by the praise she had received, that she would not be daunted by her brother's disapproval, and proceeded with her dangerous sport.

It so happened that poor little Rosamond Bright, one of the children who had been of the birthday party, was slightly deformed, and had some odd tricks and ways with her face and limbs. Lilius now stuck out her shoulder, put her head on one side, pushed forward her chin, and stuck her tongue into her cheek in a manner so like poor little Rose, that no one could mistake whom she meant to represent. She then began to walk about with a queer slouching gait, and speak in a voice so like Rose's, that Johnny and Josephine were in fits of laughter. Edward would not show how much he was amused, for he knew that Lily was doing wrong, but at the same time did not choose to let Vernon suppose that he was influenced by his opinion, and therefore remained a spectator.

Lily, delighted by her success, and inflated by vanity (for the children had at once recognized the likeness to Rose Bright), was going on exaggerating her movements, and talking all sorts of nonsense,

when, to her infinite dismay, on suddenly turning round, she discovered that she had two additional spectators to her performance—her father and Maud. In an instant all her assumed manner was thrown off, and, self-convicted, Liliast stood blushing and confused in the midst of the circle.

The other children in a measure partook of her shame, for their consciences told them that the amusement in which they had been engaged was one that Mr. Hope would disapprove.

VI.

THE FATHER'S REPROOF.

“**Y**OU are showing your little friends what they may expect from you when they are no longer present,” said Mr. Hope, in a tone of grave displeasure ; “and as they all seem so much amused at the exhibition with which you have been favoring them, they will perhaps follow your example, and amuse their friends at home by imitating some of our defects and peculiarities.”

“No, papa, not all,” said Vernon. “Gertrude has had nothing to do with it, and told Lilius that it was wrong, and went away when she would not stop.”

“I am glad to hear it,” said Mr. Hope, looking approvingly at the little girl. “I am always pleased to find that any of my little friends have sufficient strength of principle to enable them to refrain from joining in what they disapprove, although they may not have power to prevent others from doing the thing they condemn. I wish that you, Vernon, had followed Gertrude’s course,

instead of encouraging your sister in what you knew was wrong."

Vernon blushed, and did not reply; but Lily, who had a strong sense of justice, though angry with her brother, would not allow him to be blamed undeservedly, and answered for him: "Vernon did, papa. He said it was wrong, and that you would not like it, and then went away to the other side of the room, and did not look any more."

"But I did laugh and encourage her at first, papa," said the ingenuous boy. "I did not think about it until Gertrude spoke."

"I am glad that you did right at last, my boy," said Mr. Hope, pleased with his candor. "But I am sorry for these little ones," he continued, "very sorry that my child's example should have been of such bad tendency. Johnny, should you like Lilies to mimic you and Josephine as she did Rose Bright just now?"

"No, sir," replied Johnny, "not if we were like Rosie; but we are not, and people would not laugh if she did mimic us."

"Very true, my dear," replied Mr. Hope. "But how can you be sure that within a little while you may not be as odd and feeble as she is? I remember her a pretty, bright little girl as I would wish

to see. Then she had scarlet fever, and was very near death. She recovered slowly ; but the fever had left her as she now is—her poor little neck contracted, her leg shrunk, and her mind so weakened that she could scarcely understand anything.”

The children looked shocked ; and Lillas, looking up with a burning cheek, exclaimed, “O papa, I am so sorry ! If I had known that, I should never have mimicked her.”

“Your want of knowledge of the facts I have just told you, is no excuse for you, my love. You well know that I have often forbidden that most dangerous amusement of mimicking others, and told you that it was uncharitable and injurious. You are shocked now that you know how poor little Rose became such as she is ; but a moment’s thought will tell you that no one is so by choice, and that if it has pleased God to afflict any one with any deformity, that is not a subject for jest and ridicule. ‘Do unto others as you would they should do unto you,’ is a precept which, if obeyed, would be a sure check on all mimicking. It is never pleasant to have any little peculiarities that we may possess pointed out and made a subject for ridicule. How would you like to see any one mocking *me*, Lily, and making fun of *me* ?”

"They should not do it, papa, if I were there; they could not do such a thing, for there is nothing to make fun of in you," replied Liliás, indignant at the very idea of such an insult to her darling father.

"I do not see why, my child. There is no one whom ridicule cannot touch. Those who mimic one will as readily mimic another. It is no matter to the professed mimics whether the person be good or bad, wise or foolish; whether the peculiarities that supply them with an object for their amusement are the result of his own folly or of a dispensation from the hand of God, is all the same to them. They do not stop to think.

"But come," he continued, thinking that sufficient impression had been made, "I hope I shall never see any of you commit a similar fault, and we will not now say any more about it. Tell me what you are going to do next."

"Oh, we were each to do something in turn to amuse the rest," replied Edward; "Vernon sang a song, Gertrude told a story, I gave a riddle, and then Lily was mimicking, and next, Johnny was going to do a farm-yard"—

"Do a farm-yard?" inquired Mr Hope, "what does that mean?"

"Why, you must first tell me if it is wrong to imitate cocks and hens, and geese, and donkeys, and so on," asked Johnny.

"Not at all, my little man," replied Mr Hope, laughing. "Cocks and hens, and geese, and donkeys, are not at all likely to have their feelings wounded by you imitating their noises; it is only human beings that I meant to warn you against imitating."

"Then I must leave out the chickens and the cows, because I cannot do them without doing Susan calling them, you know, and that would be doing human beings," replied Johnny.

Mr. Hope explained that Johnny might safely imitate the voice of the servant calling the chickens and cows, and said, "I think this would be a fair test of whether you may imitate any voice or sound—ask yourself this question, 'Should I be vexed, if I were to find that the person or thing I am imitating was present and heard me?' If you would dislike the idea of being overheard, either by the person represented, or his friends, do not do it, but if it is a thing you could freely do in their presence, without offending them, you may be quite safe. Now, how is it in this case? would you imitate Susan in her presence?"

“Oh yes,” replied Johnny and Josephine, in a breath. “He always does it when she is there, and she laughs so when he makes the sounds of the chickens squabbling and scrambling for their food, and her voice scolding them,” added the little girl.

“Very good then,” replied Mr. Hope, “let us have the farm-yard by all means;” and Johnny, thus encouraged, began his scene. Truly his imitations of the brute creation were as life-like and clever as Lily’s of human beings, and far less dangerous; he neighed, and brayed, and cackled, and quacked, until all the children were in roars of laughter, and Mr. Hope and Maud fully joining in the mirth. Then he performed the voice of Susan calling the poultry, and the rush and clamor of the mixed multitude of ducks and fowls scrambling for their food, and ended by imitating Susan’s call to the cows, and their answering lowing, at first distant, and then nearer and nearer, and finally the sound of the milking, concluding the whole by suddenly turning head over heels!

Johnny’s share in amusing the circle was most satisfactory, and then came Josephine’s turn; but she was shy, and would not do anything, until Johnny offered to sing with her, and then the little

twins sang a pretty little playful conversational duet, which pleased all the party.

Maud was now called on for her promised contribution. "Would she tell them a story? would she sing?" "No!" Maud said she thought they had better have a good game of play, and she would help them in anything they liked; so, as it was too warm for any romping games, "post" was decided on, and Mabel being summoned, Mr. Hope took the office of postman, and a most merry game they had, which lasted until the call to bed broke up the little party for the evening.

VII.

THE BROKEN Y&SE.

SEVERAL days had passed very pleasantly, but the time for the departure of the little visitors at length arrived, and Mr. and Mrs. D'Urban were expected to fetch their little ones and Gertrude on Thursday, when they would have been a whole week at the Grange. The weather had cleared, and for the last two days had been so fine that the children had been almost entirely out of doors; and riding the pony, feeding the tame deer and rabbits, and other such amusements, had quite superseded the dolls and all their belongings; and nothing now was heard of Willie or the hooping-cough. Liliás and Johnny, whose minds were much of the same sprightly nature, had made a close alliance, and were inseparable friends, rather to the exclusion of Josephine, who, they said, was "a muff," and didn't half play—a fault that certainly could not with truth be charged on Liliás or her new friend; for they played and did everything else with an ardor that left all the others far behind.

Josephine had therefore been obliged to seek a play-mate and consoler in Maud ; whilst Mabel, Vernon, Gertrude, and Edward had employed themselves in taking long walks, with the view of collecting fossil madrepores, and other pebbles, on the shore. Every one was pleased with Gertrude. She was so thoughtful and sensible as to make an agreeable and conversable companion for the elder members of the family, and at the same time so lively and playful, and so thoroughly good-tempered, that the little ones were never so well pleased as when she was their playfellow. "Gertrude will do it for us"—"Gerty knows how, she will help us," was heard from all in turn. And the little girl was so ready and willing to help, so capable and clever, and withal so simple and unpretending, that she never took advantage of her popularity to give herself airs, or be fanciful, or conceive that she was a person of importance, but did the thing she was asked to do at once, and then returned to her own employments without seeming to look for thanks or praise.

Probably the secret cause of all this lay in the fact that Gertrude was a Christian child in more than name. She read her Bible with a view to learning God's will ; she prayed that she might understand it, and she daily sought the aid of that

Holy Spirit by whose help alone she could hope to do God's will. Gertrude both prayed and watched. She was good because she went to God, the Source of goodness, asking to be made so; she was useful because she tried to be so, and did not let her own self-pleasing stand in the way of the comfort of others, but was always ready to do anything for any one to the best of her power.

"But it was not this that made her so clever?" is a question some child may ask.—No; reading the Bible and praying did not make her clever, but it helped her to use the gifts that God had given her aright; it made her feel it her duty steadily to overcome difficulties, to give her mind to her lesson, and to try to do her best, and therefore she made more progress in learning than many a little girl who has more natural cleverness than she had, succeeds in doing. Besides this, there is nothing that helps people to do things well so much as a hearty and earnest desire to do so, and this Gertrude always had. She had a willing heart—and a willing heart makes a ready hand.

Thursday was come, and all the young party, eager to make the most of the little time that remained, were early astir; and as soon as the morning reading was over, they all started off in

different directions. Johnny had made a pea-gun, and Lily was wild about shooting ; so the two ran off hand in hand, and Josephine after them ; but the other two were too quick for her ; and she therefore wandered off to the nursery to have a last game with the dolls, under nurse's auspices—her own nurse, Anna, being busy packing up their clothes. Maud, Mabel, Vernon, and Gertrude were gone to the shore to search for a pink fossil sponge, Vernon having picked up a beautiful specimen and given it to Mabel, and Gertrude being very anxious to get one like it. The beach where it was found lay but just below the house, and was accessible through the garden of the Grange, so that they could all run up and down at will, and be in the house in two minutes from the time they left the beach. Mr. Hope soon joined the pebbling party, and Lillias and her friend, weary of shooting peas and sand into the sea, ran off to seek some other amusement.

Maud had a beautiful collection of sea-anemones and other marine animals ; and to attend to this, to watch the habits of the animals, and add from time to time to their numbers, was one of her chief delights. She had two establishments—one a large tank with fish and many varieties of anemones ; the

other a small and very elegant vase, in which she kept all her rarest and smallest specimens, madre-pores, balani, etc. The little vase was now rich in possession of some very beautiful specimens of nudibranchs—a class of slug-like animals, which are furnished with a breathing apparatus on the outside of the body, which is sometimes in the form of a coronet of tubes like feathers, and sometimes in other forms, but always very beautiful, generally of bright colors. These animals are very delicate, and if roughly handled, or in any way mismanaged, they are sure to die. Maud was justly proud of her collection; and it was strictly forbidden that any one of the children should touch the vase in which they were. It stood on a table in the oriel window of the great drawing-room.

Exceedingly busy, and much interested in their search for pebbles, it was a long time before any of the party thought of retreating to the house. They found several fine specimens of the kinds they wanted; and amongst others, Gertrude herself was so lucky as to pick up the very thing for which she was so anxious—a pink sponge as fine, or even finer than Mabel's; and then Mr. Hope, looking at his watch, announced that it was full time for them to

go in ; and the little party, with their baskets laden with spoil, turned homewards.

They had not got more than half-way to the house, when Maud heard herself loudly called, and looking on, she saw one of the servants running towards her and calling, " Oh, Miss Hope, your beautiful things is all spoiled ! The water's all runned out all over the floor, and all the fishes is dead, I'm afraid."

Exceedingly vexed and annoyed, Maud hastened on, followed, of course, by the whole party. It was as the servant had said. The whole ground below the smaller tank was soaked with water, and though the vase still stood on its stand, and the stones and animals in it, it was evident the water had long been drained off, and that they had been left dry, and were probably dead. Williams brought a pan of fresh sea-water, into which Maud hastily put the stones and shells on which her pretty favorites lay, and then inspected the vase. In the bottom she found a starred crack, with a small hole in the centre, which had evidently been made by a blow.

" Who can have done it ? " said Maud, after she had well examined the state of the vase and animals.

" I am so very sorry."

" It must have been one of the children " said

Mr. Hope. "Have any of them been playing here to-day?"

"It's master Johnny, I think, sir," said Williams; "I saw him coming out of the room this morning about ten or eleven o'clock."

"By himself, Williams?" asked Maud.

"Yes, Miss, he was alone, and he had his little pea-gun in his hand," replied Williams.

"And here's two peas on the ground," exclaimed a servant who was wiping the carpet; "here, just down under the glass."

Johnny was now summoned. He was found alone in the garden, nurse having called in his play-fellow to be dressed for dinner. He was still amusing himself with the gun, and brought it in his hand.

"Johnny, my boy," said Mr. Hope, "did you do this?"

"No," replied Johnny, "I did not."

"Are you sure?" asked Mabel; "you see here are two of your peas close by; I think you must have done it, Johnny."

"What were you doing in the room this morning, my dear?" inquired Mr. Hope.

"Nothing, I have not been here to-day. Oh yes! I did though just come in to look for Lily," said Johnny; "but I did not break the thing."

"It is strange," said Mr. Hope; "think again, Johnny—perhaps you struck it by accident and did not know that you had broken it. What did you do, love?"

"Nothing," replied Johnny, "I only came in and went out again, and I did not break it;" and the little fellow looked proudly round the circle, and seeing, as he fancied, doubt of his truth on one or two faces, began to get very angry, and added, "I've told you so before, and if you do not choose to believe me, you can let it alone."

But opinions evidently went hard against poor Johnny. Circumstances were against him, and the servants and some of the others seemed to believe him guilty.

Mr. Hope stood in serious thought. It was not that he was anxious to discover who had done the mischief, but he was doubtful whether the little boy spoke the truth, and was unwilling either to cast a doubt on one who did not deserve it, or to allow falsehood to pass triumphant.

But Gertrude now stood forward and said, "I don't think he did it, Mr. Hope. Johnny always tells the truth, and if he had, he would have said so."

As she spoke the child looked gratefully at her, slipped round and took her hand, and then, his proud

feeling subdued by one of a softer character, burst into tears. "You did not do it, Johnny?" said she, bending down to him and speaking low.

"No! I did not," replied Johnny.

"I am sure you did not, my boy," said Mr. Hope. "One who always tells the truth is not to be doubted—we all fully believe you, Johnny."

At this moment the door opened, and a servant announced Mr. and Mrs. D'Urban. Johnny flew to them, and an explanation ensued of the cause of Johnny's tearful countenance. His father and mother corroborated Gertrude's testimony; and Josephine being called, the three little visitors went with Mr. and Mrs. D'Urban into another room, whilst Mr. Hope and his children made themselves ready for dinner.

In the drawing-room, when all were assembled, the subject of the broken vase was again discussed. There were many suggestions as to how the accident had occurred. Mr. Hope had forbidden any questioning of the other children, as he felt disturbed at having so vexed poor Johnny, and was unwilling to create a like distress in any of the others.

Lilias, who had been rather delayed by nurse's having to help arrange the dress and hair of the other children, was the last to enter the room, and

join the circle. She had not before heard of the accident, and as she listened to the conversation, she blushed deeply and cast her eyes down to the ground. "I think now it must have been Johnny," said Edward in a low voice to Vernon as they both stood by Liliás.

"I do not think so," replied his brother; "he says he did not."

"Yes; but it is not sure that he would own it if he did. Don't you remember how James Thorpe denied having broken the Doctor's fuchsia, and he did it after all, and was obliged to own it too?"

What answer Vernon would have made was never known. Liliás had by this time gathered the facts, that the vase had been broken, and that Johnny had been accused of breaking it—that he had denied it, but was not believed. Blushing and distressed, yet resolute in her purpose, the little girl stepped forward and stood in the midst of the circle of friends and strangers.

"Papa! Maud!" she exclaimed; "it was I that broke the glass, at least I think so; I am almost sure of it."

"*You*, Lily! and did not own it before?" said her father.

"I only now heard that it was broken, papa," replied she.

"And yet you say that you broke it. How can that be, my dear?" inquired Mr. Hope.

Lilias blushed even deeper than before, and was silent.

"Explain yourself, Lilias, what is it you mean, my dear? Do not be so frightened, my love; only speak out plainly," said her father.

"I mean, papa," replied Lilias, "that I was looking at the pretty little things that swim on the top of the water, those little things like slugs, only bright colored, and one of the prettiest sunk down into the water and got under a stone, and I wanted to make it swim again, and so I took up the stone to let it out, and another stone slipped, and I heard a little crack, and was frightened because I thought I had broken the glass. But the water did not come out, and I did not see any crack, so I thought it was not broken, and came away."

"But, my dear little girl," said Mrs. D'Urban, kindly, "it was in that case a mere accident, and you should not look so distressed; I am sure your sister will not be angry."

"But I was told not to touch the vase, and I did," was Lily's half-whispered reply.

"Yes, dear child," replied her father, "that was the fault. The breaking the vase was an accident, but the act of disobedience was a fault. But I am glad that you see that yourself, and therefore will not say anything more about it, except that I shall expect you to pay something every week out of your allowance for two months, to assist in replacing your sister's glass, which has been broken through your fault."

"Oh, papa," said Maud, "I do not wish it; don't make her."

"It will be a good way of keeping her in remembrance of a fault that must be conquered, my love, and I must enforce this punishment," replied Mr. Hope. "I should never punish for an accident, but self-will and disobedience must bring their own reward."

Lilias was too sensible and right-minded not to understand and approve her father's decision, and fully acquiesced in it.

And now dinner was announced; and after that meal had been despatched, papa and mamma were shown all the dolls and the ponies and the other things which had proved the delights of the last few days, and then walked over every part of the grounds and to the beach. An early tea was then

taken, and the little visitors set out, in the cool of the sweet summer evening, to return to their home, leaving Lily wondering what she should do without her dear Johnny.

To Maud's great satisfaction, and even still more so to Liliass', most of Maud's beautiful and rare animals recovered in the fresh water. The wet weed had helped to keep them alive, and when the girls went to look at them, they found the pretty creatures most of them swimming about and quite recovered. Maud would fain have had Liliass excused the fine her father had laid on her, but Mr. Hope required that it should be paid, and the little girl's self-will certainly was a good deal lessened, whilst from week to week she was thus reminded of the evils of disobedience.

VIII.

LILIAS STRICKEN.

WITH such strong passions and marked characteristics as those which were developing in the child whom he so dearly loved, Mr. Hope could not be otherwise than anxious as to her future tone of mind and character. Her extreme vivacity, strong self-will, and pride, together with her craving desire to be first, most loved, most admired, most thought of, gave him great fears lest she should grow into a self-centred and unamiable woman. Many were his consultations with Maud, as to what measures could be adopted in order to subdue her pride, and guide her to the right use of the very remarkable talents with which God had graciously endowed her, but which at present seemed to lead her rather to evil than to good, by drawing on her the notice of friends and visitors, and obtaining for her a larger share of praise and notice than was at all good for her. But notwithstanding her many faults, some of which have already shown themselves in the few scenes in which

our little heroine has been introduced, Liliás was so loving and affectionate, so true and candid, and withal such a loveable child, that her father and sisters felt, that although there was much in her nature that needed correction, there were nevertheless such fine points of character manifested in her, as to give reasons for hope that she would by God's grace eventually become all they could wish.

But still the guardianship and guidance of such a mind was to her father a task of considerable anxiety, and called for much thought and earnest prayer for Divine teaching and help in the performance of the solemn duty he owed his child.

And these faithful prayers were indeed abundantly answered, though it was in a way that he had not anticipated, and one which led her and all who loved her through deep waters and amidst heavy billows. One day, in the summer succeeding that in which we have introduced our readers to the family at Coombhurst Grange, Mr. Hope went with his children to spend a day amongst the rocks and cliffs which so magnificently bound the southern coast of Devonshire, and offer such beautiful and varied scenes to those who will seek them. They went in a boat; and landing at a picturesque little cove, after amusing themselves for

some time in searching for varieties of sea animals and weeds with which to replenish Maud's aquarium, they climbed over the rocks to a second beach which lay a little beyond, leaving the boat and boatmen to await their return.

Whilst thus wandering, a sudden and violent thunder-storm arose. The crash of the thunder and the awful flashes of lightning, together with the dash of the sea, which was lashed suddenly into foaming billows, and broke wildly amongst the rocks close to them, terrified the girls exceedingly ; and Mr. Hope, seeing a cavern above high-water mark, and not far from them, hastened to get them into the shelter it afforded. He had placed Maud and Liliás within it, and was returning down the rocks to assist Mabel, who, with her usual eagerness and activity, had already ascended half-way to meet him, when a sudden slip of her foot precipitated her over the edge of the shelf of rock which she had just reached. A scream from Mabel, and a hurried exclamation from her terrified father, reached the ears of the girls within the cave, and both started forward to see what was the matter. At that moment a clap of thunder more heavy than any they had before heard, accompanied by a most vivid flash of forked lightning, broke immediately

over their heads, and Liliás fell senseless to the ground, just as Mr. Hope disappeared over the rock to render his assistance to Mabel.

Maud sprang forwards, and lifting the inanimate form of her little sister in her arms, bore it into the shelter of the cavern; for large drops of rain now began to fall; and having placed her in a safe position, she dipped some water from one of the little pools which a former high tide had left, and began to sprinkle and bathe the child's face and hands with it, thinking that she had but fainted from terror, and would soon recover. But all was in vain; Liliás showed no signs of life, and having no other means of restoration at hand, Maud left her lying in the cave, and ran on towards the point where they had seen Mr. Hope disappear, to call him to their aid.

Her position was indeed a trying one—her anxiety about Liliás could not wholly supersede her fears for Mabel, and as she stood on that solitary spot, and shouted for help to those who she feared were themselves needing assistance, her heart almost sunk within her. But Maud was steadfast in faith, and lifted up her heart to God for strength, and soon was she rejoiced by the sight of her father and Mabel, ascending by a more easy path than

that which they had at first taken. Mabel had sustained but slight injury from her fall, and soon all were gathered round the apparently dead child, each striving in different ways to restore her to consciousness.

“Had you not better go and bid the boatmen come round from the other cove, papa?” said Maud. “The storm is over, and we will watch Lily until you return to carry her down. The sooner we can get home the better.”

“How can I leave you here alone, my dears?” replied Mr. Hope; “and yet, I know nothing better that I can do.”

“Let me go, papa,” said Maud. “I can easily get across, and meanwhile, you can carry Lily down the rocks, and be ready to put her into the boat the moment it comes round, and I can call at that cottage we passed, and bring some fresh water at any rate, if not other restoratives.”

Unwilling as Mr. Hope was to send Maud thus alone, he felt that her plan was the best that could be adopted, and she hastened away; whilst he, raising the child in his arms, and folding the little lifeless form to his bosom, began to convey her down to the shore. The motion, or the tender pressure of his arms, at last awoke Lili-
as to some

degree of sensation ; she sighed heavily again and again, and at last a tear began to roll over her cheek.

“Thank God ! thank God !” exclaimed her father, “she lives !” and laying her on a bank of shingle, with her head on Mabel’s lap, he again dashed water from the pools over her, and had the blessing of seeing that, although she was still unconscious, yet her deadly faintness began to yield, and a slight tinge of color returned to her cheek. The boat now came up, and he lifting her into it, Maud’s arms received her weary little form.

“Now pull away, my good fellows, double pay for double-quick work, and if either of you weary, give me an oar, but only get us quick home,” said Mr. Hope ; and thus enjoined, although the sea was yet heaving from the influence of the late storm, the oarmen did indeed “pull with a will,” and within an hour the suffering child was laid on her bed, in the little room next her father’s that she had occupied from infancy.

Dr. Graves, the physician who attended the family, was instantly summoned, and was soon earnestly engaged in studying the pulse, skin, and all other points which might indicate the state of his little patient, whilst her father sisters, and good



Blind Lillas.

“Now pull away, my good fellows.”



old nurse, stood silently awaiting his opinion. Many remedies were applied, before any result beyond a faint moaning, accompanied by a restless movement of the head, and twitching in the limbs, was produced on the poor inanimate child ; and it was easy to see by Dr. Graves' countenance, that he had serious fears about her. At length, however, the poor little girl became more composed, and by degrees the twitching of the muscles subsided, the tension of the skin relaxed, and Lily fell into a gentle sleep : not, however, quite unbroken by starts and other manifestations of a distressed nervous system.

Leaving nurse and Maud to watch by the little sleeper, Mr. Hope now took the doctor aside, to ask in private what were his views of Lily's case, and was much relieved by the kind friend's assurance that he had now little fear but that she would recover. He said, however, that the system had received some very severe shock, and that he must watch over her for some time to come ; and, promising to return in the evening, he left Mr. Hope somewhat comforted, though still very anxious.

"Lilias slept for some hours ; then awoke conscious, but very feeble. Before long, however, she

fell into a state which bordered on delirium, and for many weeks struggled on between life and death. And sad, sad was the heart of her father, sad too the hearts of all around the poor little sufferer ; for soon it was plain to all, that the lightning stroke that had cast her to the earth, had been the bearer of a heavy message to them all—Lilias was blind.

Her eyes were to all appearance uninjured, and when she opened the lids and seemed to look up, none could have imagined that the clear blue orbs, which looked so lovely under their long fringing lashes were sightless, that they would never again be the instrument of bringing objects before her mind, and that a long, long darkness lay before her—long, in all probability, as the term of her mortal life.

The exceeding wo of her father when this fact broke on his mind, may be imagined. There was no help for him but in his God. Yet Mr. Hope could say confidently, “I know in whom I have believed.” He could recognize a Father’s hand even in this dire affliction ; and from the first moment in which the heavy trial fell on him no words but those of meek submission and pious acceptance of his Father’s will were ever once heard from him. And though himself almost overwhelmed with grief,

it was he who comforted the sorrowing brothers and sisters; it was he who tried to console poor nurse, who, broken down under the sorrow that had fallen on her darling, could not be comforted.

As by slow degrees Liliás recovered consciousness and reason, she, as yet unconscious of the loss she had sustained, repeatedly asked for more light, and inquired in a half audible voice whether it was not almost morning; then Dr. Graves desired that a handkerchief might be lightly bound over the eyes, and that she might be told that he had ordered it as her eyes were weak, and she must submit for a time to wear it. This he did in order to delay her perception that she was blind until her recovery was a little more advanced, and the poor child, too weak to care much about it, wore the handkerchief as she was bidden. But by degrees, as she gained strength, her father felt that the hour he had anticipated with so much pain was come, and gently and tenderly, after much prayer that God's support might be given to her and to himself, he broke the sad news to her, and besought her to bear it patiently. Liliás, poor child, would not for a time believe that she was blind. She tore off the handkerchief that had hitherto shielded her from the sad knowledge which now was so tenderly opened to

her, and then, indeed, she found that no ray of light visited her eyes ; and when, in reply to her urgent demands that she should be told how she came so, and when she should get well, the story of the storm (which she had quite forgotten) was told her, and her father said that he could not at present hope for any speedy recovery, the poor little girl gave way to such violent and impetuous lamentations and distress, and was so wholly overcome, that a relapse ensued, and for a time she was again very ill, so that great fears were entertained of her recovery. When she was again sufficiently recovered to think or speak on the subject, no arguments or persuasions seemed to have any weight with her to induce her even to try to be submissive and patient ; and the anguish of her father and family was greatly increased by the petulance with which she rejected every word of advice or consolation that they could offer. After a time, however, the violence of her despair yielded to a settled depression of spirits, accompanied by a cold, impassive manner, and it was evident that she had resolved in no way to endeavor to meet her trial patiently, or make any effort to alleviate its force. She would not be induced to make any attempt to assist her-

self, or acquire any resources which might enable her to employ her time comfortably, but gave herself up to a sort of sullen stillness which it was most painful to witness. Such was her state up to the time at which our story recommences.

IX.

CHERISHED GRIEF.

IN the comfortable and cheerful drawing-room at Coombhurst Grange sat two people on one fine evening in May. The casements were open, and the sweet, soft air that breathed through them was laden with the scent of many a fair flower that bloomed without. Blackbirds and thrushes, and a thousand other birds, sang cheerily on the trees and shrubs that skirted the lawn, and all nature seemed alive and gay. But the occupants of the drawing-room at the Grange seemed scarcely to feel in unison with the cheerful scene without. They were our two old friends, Mr. Hope and his little daughter Lilius. Mr. Hope appeared to have grown several years older in the course of the few months that had passed since last we saw him.

His hair was more sprinkled with silver, his fine countenance exhibited traces of care and suffering, and the bright animation and even mirthfulness of look which had always before this time distinguished him, had wholly vanished, and a grave and rather

sad, though still calm and peaceful, expression had taken its place.

Lilias was even more altered than her father. She was now a fair, delicate-looking child, very slight and even thin, and the joyous expression which used always to gladden her countenance, had changed into a mournful, and perhaps rather sullen look. Her hair which used to hang in long curls down her back, had all been cut off in her illness, and now clustered in close curls all over her head, completely laying bare her fine high forehead and temples, to which the extreme blueness of the veins gave a peculiarly delicate and singular appearance. She was lying on a couch near the open window her little thin hand resting on her father's knee, who sat by her; and had apparently been reading to her. He had now, however, ceased to do so, and was at that moment sorrowfully gazing on the child. At length he rose, and leaning over her couch, kissed her tenderly, and drawing her into his arms, he rested her head on his shoulder, as he seated himself on the edge of her couch, and then kissed her again and again.

As he did so, the tears suddenly flowed down her cheeks, and heavy sobs rose audibly on his ear. "What is it, my child?" he asked; "why does

my Lily cry so sadly? Tell me, dearest, what it is."

"I am sorry, papa," sobbed the child, nestling into his bosom, and trying to still the agitation that his affectionate manner had brought to a crisis; for before he spoke, one silent tear and her look of sorrow had alone indicated that a struggle was going on in her heart. "It is of no use to say anything about it, papa. I did not mean to vex you; it was only that something made a choking feeling come in my throat, and then I could not help crying."

"What was it, darling? what made that feeling come? tell me, dear," said Mr. Hope.

"I think it was part of what you were reading, papa," replied Liliás. "But never mind; don't cry too, papa; never mind."

"What was it, my precious child? was it that the beautiful scenes of which I was reading, were bringing your loss to your remembrance?"

Liliás was silent; she liked to brood over her grief, but not to speak of it.

"Tell me, my child, was it so?"

"Yes, papa," replied Liliás, "that was it—when you read about the sheep. Read it again, dear papa. I shall not cry now, and then we will talk about it;" and as she wished, Mr. Hope resumed

the volume of Milton from which he had been reading, and, in beautiful and varied tones, read to his child that exquisite description of God's "far more pleasant garden."

"Out of the fertile ground He caused to grow
 All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste;
 And all amid them stood the tree of life,
 High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit
 Of vegetable gold; and next to life,
 Our death, the tree of knowledge, grew fast by,
 Knowledge of good bought dear by knowing ill.
 Southward through Eden went a river large,
 Nor changed his course, but through the shaggy hill
 Pass'd underneath ingulf'd, for God had thrown
 That mountain as His garden-mould, high raised
 Upon the rapid current, which, through veins
 Of porous earth with kindly thirst updrawn,
 Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill
 Water'd the garden; thence united fell
 Down the steep glade, and met the nether flood,
 Which from his darksome passage now appears;
 And now, divided into four main streams,
 Runs divers, wandering many a famous realm
 And country, whereof here needs no account;
 But rather to tell how, if Art could tell,
 How from that sapphire fount the crisped brooks,
 Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold,
 With mazy error under pendant shades
 Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed
 Flowers worthy of Paradise, which not nice Art
 In beds and curious knots, but Nature boon
 Pour'd forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain,
 Both where the morning sun first warmly smote

The open field, and where the unpiercé shade
Imbrown'd the noontide bowers. Thus was this place
A happy rural seat of various view ;
Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm,
Others whose fruit, burnish'd with golden rind,
Hung amiable,—Hesperian fables true,
If true, here only,—and of delicious taste :
Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks
Grazing the tender herb, were interposed ;
Or palmy hillock, or the flowery lap
Of some irriguous valley spread her store,
Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose."

"There ! papa," said Lilies, "that was what made me feel sad ! All those grand descriptions of glorious foreign scenes, such as I never saw, delight me, and I can fancy them all, and think I see them, because, you know, I never really have seen them, and so I can fancy them as well now that I am blind as I could before, when I could see ; but when I think of the copses with their pretty trees, and flowers, and the butterflies and bees flitting about amongst them, and of our own brooks and meadows, that I shall never see again, I feel so sorrowful ! And I thought of the old shaggy sheep, and the flocks of pretty white lambs, playing 'shock' on the sunny slopes, and then coming and kneeling down to suck, and shaking their long tails with delight, as I saw them before I lost my sight, and then—Oh, papa, how shall I ever bear it ! *Never*

to see you and dear Mandie and Mabel again, nor my brothers! *never* to see the flowers, and the birds, and the lambs! Oh, papa! I would rather have died at once." And, giving way to her emotions, the poor child sobbed with almost hysterical distress.

Mr. Hope still sat on Lily's couch, and held her in his arms; and now, gently soothing her, he suffered her to weep unrestrainedly for a few moments until her excited feelings were in a measure relieved. Then he spoke:—

"My child, you know whose hand it is that has thus stricken you. My darling says it would have been better to die than thus to lose the sight of all the dear familiar objects. If the choice were given to papa, and he could dare to choose, he would rather have himself died; or, what my child thinks is even worse, he would rather far have been made blind himself, than that his precious little one should lose the power of sight. But, thank God, we have not had to choose—we should have chosen wrong, darling! What we have to do is to try to accept God's will—to *have the same will with Him*, so as not even to wish things to be otherwise than He appoints them for us. Try to do so, my child. I give you that for your aim in life—aim always to

consent to His will, dearest; not only to bear it with what is called resignation, but to accept it."

"But I am so young, papa," answered the child, "and it is so *very* terrible. I am sure I could *never* get to be willing to bear this constant, dreadful darkness. It is very hard, papa!"

"You will never be able to bear it in your own strength, Lilies," replied her father. "If you seek grace and strength from God you will be able not only to bear, but accept this great trial; but never without it, my love. I was once nursing a little dying boy of just your age. His disease, which was in the brain, caused such agony of suffering as I never before saw a child endure. One day I said to him when I saw the anguish he suffered, 'Oh, my child, it is well that I have not the power to take away this pain, for I should surely do it! Yet if it were good for you that it should be removed God could do it, and as He does not, it is plain that it would not be right to do so.'

"'Yes,' he replied, 'you love me, and you would take it away; and God loves me better than you do, and He could take it away, and does not; and so if He does not I would rather keep the pain, He will help me to bear it;' and although the agony rather increased than lessened, and continued to

within a few days of the close of his sweet and holy life, I never once heard him say a word that indicated other than entire submission to God's will. Try you to do the same, my own darling, and be sure, if your earthly father suffers with you, and would give his very life to save you from this trial, that your heavenly Father looks with even dearer love and pity on you."

"What was that you read to Maud on Sunday, from a little paper that you took out of your Bible, papa? It was something about trying to have *fellowship* with God."

"It was, dear, that 'to the end that we should be partakers of His holiness, we should cultivate *fellowship* with God our Father in His avowed and gracious designs.' Now, when we have a friend whom we greatly honor and reverence, and love as much as we honor him, and this friend invites us to help him in doing some great and noble work that will bring honor and credit to him, we are not content with knowing the end he proposes, but we strive to understand exactly the way in which he would have it done, and to follow that way exactly. We are gratified when he lets us work with him, and for him, and makes us fellow-workers with himself, and our aim is not merely that the thing

he wishes may be done, but that it may be done in the way he likes. Now, this is as we should work for God. Have fellowship with Him. Delight to do His will, and to do it in His own way, not shrinking back when that way is hard and difficult, or when it involves pain and deprivation, but thinking always, 'My Father has my good and His own glory in view, and I must not mind if I have to bear things which I do not like in the way of doing it.'"

"But, father, I cannot like to be blind. It is a *great* trial."

"It is, my darling, I cannot doubt it. But I trust that God will enable you to bear it patiently, and in the end to accept it at His hand."

"But here come your sisters from their walk ; I see them coming up the avenue," continued he, after a pause, during which both he and Liliás had been in deep thought. "You must think of all we have said, my love, and pray—pray much, my child, and try to 'wait on the Lord ;' we will talk more at another time. Now lie still and rest, dearest, until Maud and Mabel come. They will soon be here ; and kissing Liliás fondly, he placed her pillows comfortably, and laying her on them, himself took a book and began to read.

X.

NEW FACES.

“WELL, children,” said Mr. Hope, as his two nice-looking girls, clad in walking-dresses and followed by a fine Newfoundland dog, entered the room, “what have you to tell us? Here are we longing for some news from the garden of the sea! Have you found any new beds of anemones, or got us some fresh sea-cucumbers to eat with our pickled salmon to-morrow? Ha, Mr. Nep! what business have you here, I should like to know? Dogs in carpeted rooms! I am ashamed of you, sir. No, no! Lily,” added he in reply to a word of entreaty from the little girl, who was caressing her beautiful favorite; “‘everything in its place, and a place for everything;’ and Master Nep’s place is in the stable-yard, and not in the drawing-room, and there he must go! Why, girls, how could you think of bringing him into the room? he is quite wet.”

“O papa,” said Maud, “we thought we had left him in the stable-yard, but the doors being all

open, I suppose he followed us in. He has had such a capital bath."

"Well, he must go now," replied her father. "Come, old fellow," he added, rising and proceeding to put the unwilling dog out of the room; but Neptune remonstrated so earnestly against going alone, that his master, patting his great head, submitted to his all but spoken wish, and left the room with him, saying that he would give the dog and himself a few minutes' walk before tea.

Maud took the place her father had left, and began caressing her little sister, whilst Mabel went to take off her bonnet and prepare for tea.

When Mabel returned to the room, her father had just come back from his walk with Neptune, and taken possession of his accustomed arm-chair. Eagerly seating herself on a stool at his feet, and fixing her eyes on his face with a sparkling look of delight, she exclaimed, "O papa, my own dear pater, we have met with such an adventure. We have seen such a sweet creature, and I am quite in love with her. O Maud, how shall we find out who she is, and get acquainted with them?"

"Indeed, May, that is more than I can tell you," replied Maud, laughing. "It will be easy enough to find out who they are; but"——

"Oh, yes, I know," interrupted Mabel; "of course we cannot get acquainted with them without some introduction, or having some proper reason for calling. But if they turn out to be very nice people, you will let us go and see them, will you not, papa? I know they must be very charming, and would just suit us."

"If you will solve the problem which your words imply, May, we will think about it," replied Mr. Hope.

"What problem, papa?" asked Mabel.

"Why, how we are to find out whether they are 'very nice people' or not, before we know them. At present they represent 'an unknown quantity.' Are we to put down x and y , and 'swat it out by algebra," (as the Addiscombe boys used to say,) before we can discover their value? But come, pussy, tell me all about this new wonder. Who is *she*?"

"Why, papa," replied Mabel, laughing and nestling into her favorite place in the corner of his chair, "that is exactly what I cannot do. But I am sure she must be really worth knowing—she was riding on a donkey."

"Well, then, really," said Mr. Hope, with mock gravity, "that does augur something re-

markable. I do not wonder at your enthusiasm." Lily laughed aloud, and all the others joined in chorus.

"No, no, papa," rejoined Mabel. "I did not mean that there was anything remarkable in that; but now, please, let me tell you all about it, and not once interrupt me or laugh at me. There, now, you cannot say another word," said she playfully laying her hand on his mouth. "Well, Maud and I were sitting chatting in the little cove, and watching the waves as they broke over the rocks. Oh, it was so lovely to-night, pater, I wish you had been there! Well, as I said, we were sitting on the shingle with Nep (who had just been making fine fun in the water) lying at our feet, when we heard some very merry voices, and, turning to look, we saw coming down the path from the village, a cavalcade which interested us amazingly. First and foremost bounded a lovely little Italian greyhound—a sort of dove-colored creature—the very *beau ideal* of grace and lightness; and he was followed by a child as light and graceful as himself, with long golden curls, and the loveliest little feet and legs that were ever seen. Another little girl, apparently a year or two older, followed her, and they and their pretty dog so absorbed our attention, that we scarcely no-

ticed the rest of the party until they came close to us; and then, oh then, out went my heart with a great bound, and clung to the heart of the most lovely, the most perfect creature I ever saw! Was she not charming Maud? Oh, I do wish we could know her!" and, springing from her seat, Mabel began to rave about the charms of her new friend elect, whilst Mr. Hope and Maud watched her with half amused and half anxious thoughts; for they could not but fear that so much of suddenness and intensity of impression, such eager vehemence, must, if not carefully watched over and checked, be a source of future suffering and evil to the beloved child, who, wholly unconscious of their thoughts, continued to pour forth her eloquent praises.

"My child," said her father, tenderly, "I do not like to see you so eager and vehement. It makes me tremble for your future happiness when I see you thus giving way to an uncontrolled imagination, and so ready to bestow your affections on any object which may present an alluring aspect, before you have given your judgment time or opportunity to pass verdict on its fitness. This redundancy of fancy needs schooling, my child. You remember what we were reading the other day in Butler.

He calls imagination 'that froward delusive faculty ever obtruding beyond its sphere; of some assistance, indeed, to apprehension, but the author of all error.' You remember the passage, dear?"

"Oh yes! father," replied the blushing and half tearful girl; "it is very true. I have but too often proved the folly of my vehemence, and I will try to repress and check it—I will indeed, dearest father," she added, kissing his forehead; then, after a pause, continued, "But now, pater, you must just let me tell you about this young lady, because you know I am never quite happy until I have told you everything I am thinking about, and I cannot help thinking of her."

"Oh, tell me by all means, dear," replied Mr. Hope. "I shall like to hear whatever interests my child."

"Well then, papa," resumed Mabel, "she was riding on Dobbs' donkey, and by her side walked a nice-looking girl of about fifteen, I should think. She and the two little ones were sisters, I suppose, for they were much alike, and all had fair complexions; but the young lady on the donkey had quite a different cast of features, and was quite unlike the rest. She looked like a foreigner; her hair was

very dark—almost, if not quite black. Her figure was perfect—so light and graceful—and her features were quite classical. When we first saw her, she was entirely colorless, her face as white as marble ; but as she turned her head and spied us (for you know we were half hidden by the rocks, and she did not see us at first), such a lovely geranium tint rose on her cheek, and then died away again ! it was as when a wave curls over and catches on its surface a rosy tint from the rising sun, looking for a moment all brilliancy, and then losing its rich tinting as suddenly as it caught it. I never saw anything so exquisitely lovely as her whole appearance.”

“And of what age might this *rara avis* seem ?” asked Mr. Hope.

“She was older than the others,” replied Mabel. “I should think she must have been about twenty. Oh, she was such a sweet creature, papa ! I quite love her already. All the party were dressed as simply as possible, and all in very slight mourning ; but there was something a little peculiar about the form of their dresses which led us to think they must be foreigners, and the fine full guttural of the respectable elderly woman who was their only attendant (except Johnny Dobbs, the donkey boy)

confirmed our suspicions. Well, pater, from the pommel of Meta's saddle—they called her Meta (that is the German diminutive for Margaret, you know)—from the pommel of her saddle hung a zinc case, into which we afterwards saw them putting specimens of sea-weed, and the servant carried a tin botanical case; so I conclude they are botanists. And that makes me more anxious than ever to know them, for I do want a little help in my botany; not exactly help, papa, because you can tell me everything I want to know, but I should like some one to collect with me, and care about making a *hortus siccus*. It is not in Queen Maud's way; for though she delights in the flowers when they are sweet and fresh, she never cares about what she calls 'their dead bodies, when all the life has been squeezed out in the press.' However, I know we must have some better reason for making acquaintance with people than that one rides on a donkey, and the others have a dog and botanical cases; and so I must try to be wise and patient, and not let that 'obtrusive faculty' victimize me any further on the subject," added Mabel, laughing, as she rose from her father's side, at which she had again seated herself; and now I must go and give Lily's bird its groundsel." Leaving the room a few minutes

with Maud, who went to lay aside her bonnet, they both soon returned; and Maud, seating herself at the table began to make the tea, whilst the others took their places, and the meal proceeded amidst pleasant chat and mirthful laughter.

XI.

TAKING UP THE CROSS.

LILIAS was quiet and thoughtful during tea; and after it was over, Maud led her to her couch, and sat down near her, with some wild flowers that she was going to arrange, in her hand.

“Now, Maud,” said Lily, whose head rested on her sister’s shoulder, whilst her little thin hand was employed in feeling the flowers, “I think I can tell you every flower you hold in your hand: I am going to try how well I can do with feeling instead of seeing. You have some wild roses, one honeysuckle, some of the Portland spurge that grows at the foot of the cliff, and three pyramidal orchises! Is that right?”

“Nearly, darling,” replied Maud, caressing her, but with tears rising in her eyes, as she saw that dear little hand groping amidst the sweet flowers; “nearly, but not quite—only two *pyramidal* orchises, and”——

“Oh, don’t tell! stay a minute: let me feel

again. I know; two pyramidal, and one of the light ones with spotted leaves. Is not that right? I know by those long leaflets that grow up amongst the blossoms."

"*Bracts*, they are called; dear," said Mabel. "It is *Orchis palmata*. You clever little thing, to find out so quickly! But there are more, Lily."

"Yes," said Lily, still lightly passing her little fingers over the leaves, and stems, and petals, of the flowers; "there is a bee orchis—two, three real bee orchises. How long it is since I saw a bee orchis: we used to find them on the windmill hill! And do you remember my finding what we called the butterfly flower—I mean the blade of grass with seven little blue butterflies all asleep on it, hanging one below another like a spike of blossoms—and how I brought them all home? Oh, how beautiful that place was! O Maud, Maud!" And poor Lily bent her head, overpowered with a gush of tears, as the remembrance of her lost sense, and of the lovely scene on which she should never again look, arose to her mind.

Maud wept also, and pressed her in her arms. Mr. Hope and Mabel had left the room whilst Lily was speaking, and the two sisters continued silent for a few minutes. Then Lilius lifted her head, and

turning her sightless eyes towards her companion's face, as though as of old she could watch every glance of that beloved countenance, said resolutely—

“You must not cry, Maud, nor must I—not ever again—I mean, not because I am blind. I am going to try to accept the trial, and to turn it into a blessing, dearest Maud. Papa has been telling me about trying to let God do what He thinks right cheerfully, and having fellowship with Him, the same as I used to like so much to have fellowship with papa, and help him in anything he is doing; and so I am going to try if I cannot learn to have fellowship with God, and be satisfied with what He has done, and try to like it because He does it; and therefore, Maud, do not you pity me any more. I mean, not say anything about it, or cry over me, but pray to God to make me able to be very happy, and not fret for what He has taken away.”

“May He indeed help you, my precious child!” said Maud. “And He will help you, Lily; and I will try to help and strengthen you rather than to weaken you, as I have hitherto done by my sorrow.”

“And Mabel too,” said Lily; “you must tell

Mabel, and we must all agree to try and remember the many pleasant things that are left ; and you must teach me to do things without eyes that other people can only do with them, and I shall make a pleasure out of surprising people with what I can do—that will not be wrong, Maud, will it ? You know I hope not to be vain and proud, and I know it will be by God's help if I am able to do anything ; but I think it would amuse and please me, and take off my thoughts from being sorry, if I were to learn to do all sorts of things—to work, and to knit, and I might learn a little of botany, and I think, if you do not mind teaching me, I might go on with music, and many things—might I not, Maud ?”

“You may indeed, my darling,” replied Maud. “And dear Lilies, if this trial does truly lead you nearer to God, and bring you to rest on Him, and look to Him from hour to hour, it will indeed prove a blessing in disguise.”

“Yes, that it will ! I have begun already, Maud ! that was why I felt the flowers—you know I never did that before. I never liked to take them in my hand, because they put me in mind of my blindness, and so with many other things. You know, Uncle William used to say, ‘Little girls should see

with their eyes, and not with their fingers ;' and now I must say, ' Blind little girls must see with their fingers, and not with their eyes,' " added she, laughing.

" True, my precious child," answered Maud. " Do you know, I have heard of some blind people whose sense of touch had become so acute that they were even able to distinguish colors? And you will soon find, dear Lily, that you will succeed in doing many things if you make a steady effort—things which you would have thought it impossible to do without sight. I once knew an old woman, that had lost her sight after she was grown up, who cut out and made all her own gowns and caps, and every article she wore, and not only so, but washed and ironed them all herself; and she was so neat and nice in her appearance, that you would never have known she could not see."

" How curious it must have been to see her feeling about to cut the things, Maud! I should like to do such things. But did she never burn herself with the irons, or cut her hands with the scissors?" said Lily.

" I never heard of her doing so, dear," replied Maud; " though no doubt she did at first, and you must expect little accidents and failures at the begin-

ning of your efforts, you know; you will soon gain experience, however, if you go on patiently. But here is nurse to take you to bed, darling. God bless and strengthen you, my child;" and affectionately kissing each other, the sisters separated for the night.

The next day was Sunday, a day that was always one of calm and quiet enjoyment at Coombhurst Grange. The family met rather earlier than usual for prayers, in order to give time for the elder girls to reach the school-house, before the assembling of the Sunday school, in which they both were accustomed to take an active part.

Since Liliás' illness, Mr. Hope had himself taken charge of her at that hour, and during those of the morning service, leaving her under the care of one or other of her sisters in turn, whilst he enjoyed the benefit of the second service. On this day, however, soon after Maud and Mabel had withdrawn, and Mr. Hope had begun to read to Liliás, she said, "Papa, if you will read the psalms and lessons first to-day before church-time, instead of doing so when the people are in church as you used, you could go to the service with Maud and May, could not you? I do not think you can like

to stay at home every Sunday morning, and I shall not mind, papa."

"But you will be alone, my darling, and I fear you would feel sad and solitary, if I were to leave you with only nurse."

"I will try not to mind it, papa; I do not mean to be selfish any longer. Nursie shall say all her hymns to me, and I will try to learn one from her to say to you, when you come home; and she talks so kindly that though she cannot read to me, I shall be very comfortable, and then you know if it is a little dull it will not signify, and I shall try to think about what we were talking of last night. I am so much obliged to you, dearest papa, for saying all that."

"Well, Lilies," replied Mr. Hope, "it shall be so; I will join your sisters at church, and I do not think you will be sorry that you have exercised self-denial, my child. But, remember, I shall depend on it that you do not allow yourself to yield to repining thoughts. If you feel that you do not bear the loneliness so well as you expect, tell me at once, darling, and I will not again leave you."

But the little girl was steadfast in her desire, and for the first time since her accident, her father, who

felt that, although it was painful to him to do so, it was better for his little one that she should be allowed to follow the dictates of her mind and conscience in the matter, left her in the house with only the servants, and joined his other children in the house of God.

Lily bore her solitude manfully—it was no slight trial to her, to be left thus for the first time in her blindness ; and as she had hitherto suffered herself to sink under the blow, and made no effort to accustom herself to the position in which she stood, she now felt it more painfully than she would, had she from the first endeavored to move about alone, or to find some sort of occupation with which she could employ herself independently of others. There had been some excuse for the poor child not exerting herself, for her long illness had weakened her powers, both of mind and body, and the suddenness of the stroke had, as it were, paralyzed her faculties. It had been with great sorrow that Mr. Hope and her sisters had seen her so entirely reject all their endeavors to rouse her from the state of depression into which she had fallen. Now, however, her father, rejoiced in the hope that a new spirit was at work within her, and a new principle influenc-

ing her actions; and so, with many prayers, that it might please God to subdue her heart, and mould it to His will, he left her to carry out her first independent effort to meet and conquer adversity.

XII.

SELF-CONFIDENCE.

AT first Lilius made several grand and tolerably successful efforts to be happy, and to prove to herself that she was quite capable of following out her plan. She repeated some hymns, or rather tried to do so, but found that, from a long habit of neglect, they had nearly all slipped from her once accurate memory, and that there was not one that she could say through without mistake. Then she sang a little, and then nurse came, and she got her to remind her of the parts of the hymns she had forgotten, and thus succeeded in making herself again perfect in two or three, telling nurse that next Sunday she should refresh her memory with more. After this she made nurse repeat some of her own store of hymns, and some passages of Scripture; and then another of the servants brought her a plate of fresh strawberries and a bit of cake, which little refection created a most satisfactory diversion against the inroads of *ennui*; and that ended, the little girl told nurse that she was not to help her,

for that she was going to try how well she could walk about by herself. So she got up, and with outstretched arms began to feel around her.

"I shall go out on the terrace, nurse, and when I get to the door, you can help me a little, but not before," said she.

But vainly did poor Lily strive to find the door ; she wandered first towards the window, and then turning from that, stumbled over a footstool, and ended by striking herself against a couch and falling flat on it. Then she began to cry rather passionately, and when nurse would have helped and comforted her, she struck her, pushed her petulantly aside, and renewed her crying and lamentations, saying, that "it was of no use to try, she was sure that she never could get about alone, and that she was a most unhappy and wretched child."

In the midst of this scene of distress the door opened, and Mr. Hope with Maud entered the room.

"O Liliás, my child !" said he, "this is not as I had hoped to find you ; I should not have left you had I expected this. What is it, dear ? What has happened, and why are you lying in this corner of the room and crying so violently ? What is it, nurse ?" asked he, seeing that Liliás continued to sob and give no answer.

Nurse explained what had occurred ; and then Liliás petulantly exclaimed, "I shall never be able to get about, papa. It is of no use to try ;" and again the poor child, yielding to anger and passion, sobbed and cried aloud.

"You could scarcely expect to succeed fully at the first trial, my dear," replied her father. "You must not be discouraged by one failure."

"A little at a time, Lily," said Maud, kindly. "Patience and steady perseverance will conquer in time. You have expected too much, my pet, and thought you should succeed at once."

"Come, Liliás, let me lead you back to your couch, my dear," said Mr. Hope gravely, seeing that she rudely repulsed her sister and continued crying. "I hope our next trial will succeed better than this, or I shall return to my former habits, and not leave you alone." He spoke with a tone which Liliás well understood to be one of displeasure, for he saw that temper rather than depression was the cause of her distress. Gently lifting her in his arms, he placed her on her own couch, and, taking his Bible, sat silent by her side, whilst she continued to sob and cry until, exhausted by her own vehemence, the poor child, who still remained weak and delicate from the effects of her

long illness, fell asleep with the tears yet glittering on her cheeks.

Dinner was now announced. On Sunday Mr. Hope made it a rule that the usual family arrangements should yield as much as possible to the higher claims of the day, and every facility be given for each member of his household to attend on public worship, as also for his girls to be able to take their place in the school with punctuality. An early and chiefly cold dinner, therefore, took the place of their usual later meal, and a rather more solid tea-meal than on other days was always greatly enjoyed by the whole party. Leaving Lilies under the care of nurse, Mr. Hope joined his daughters in the dining-room.

"Where is Lily?" asked Mabel, who had gone at once to her room after church, and had consequently not witnessed the little scene we have described. "Shall I fetch her?"

"No, my dear," replied her father, "she is asleep;" and he then explained to Mabel how he had found her, and said, "Poor darling, she has a great and trying work before her, and we must expect that she will fail many times before she succeeds in bending her head meekly to the Hand which afflicts her."

“But you seemed displeased with her, papa,” said Maud. “Why was that? Poor child, I could not wonder when I saw her so overcome at finding her inability to move about alone.”

“I do not wonder at that either, my dear; nor would any exhibition of sorrow have made me displeased with Lily. She has but just begun to look her sore trial in the face, and it will be long before she is able to take up the cross, and bear it cheerfully; nothing but Divine grace can enable her to do so, and God forbid that I should be angry with my child for failing, where I have myself so often and so greatly failed.” He was silent for a minute, probably struggling against the grief that oppressed him on account of his child, and lifting up his heart to God for strength for her and himself. “But I *was* displeased with Lili^as, and must let her feel that I am,” continued he, after a time. “Pride was the cause of her tears, and petulance the result of her failure to get into the garden alone. She is a precious child; but self-dependence, self-satisfaction, have from infancy been the faults of her nature. These must be subdued; and I can see in the character of the trial which it has pleased God to lay on her a fitness that makes me full of hope that she will eventually come forth ‘as gold refined

in the furnace.' Hitherto this pride has shown itself in a morbid resolution **not** to be comforted—not to try to do anything for herself. Now I truly hope and believe that her heart is touched by a better principle. She entered most sweetly into the spirit of the conversation which I had with her last night, and her little effort to begin to bring her new resolution into practice, by feeling your flowers, touched me greatly. This morning, too, her desire that I should leave her, and go to church, delighted me; for I knew what an effort it must have cost her to deny herself my society, and remain alone. I would fain have stayed, but I felt that it was better to go, and I went. Then, satisfied with herself, my poor child yielded to the old fault, and fancying she was strong, was allowed to feel her weakness. It will do her good, dear," he added, in reply to a pitying look from Mabel. "You know it would not have been right for me to let her think I could mistake petulance for sorrow. We shall talk it over when she wakes, and you need not fear that I do not fully appreciate the struggle she is making. Would God that I could bear it for her! but it must be between her and her God; and all that I can do is to guard her from any injury that our loving pity, if not properly directed and restrained, might inflict on her."

XIII.

PRIDE SUBDUED.

AS soon as dinner was over, and the girls were gone to the school, Mr. Hope returned to his little daughter. He found her awake, and learned, on inquiry, that nurse had brought her some dinner, of which she had partaken; so, dismissing the good woman, he sat down by Lily's couch, and began to converse with her.

On his entrance she looked ashamed, but turned away from him with a cold, offended manner, as if she were the aggrieved person.

"My dear child," said Mr. Hope, "you have vexed and disappointed me to-day. Tell me, dear, what was it that so much upset you? What had occurred to make you cry so violently this morning?"

"I do not know what I have done wrong, I am sure, papa," replied Lily, avoiding a direct reply to her father's question; "nor why you are angry with me," added she, coldly and proudly. "I did

my best to manage for myself, and it was not my fault if I fell down and struck myself."

"Am I displeased with you, Lily, because you fell down?" asked Mr. Hope gravely, and waiting for an answer.

"I don't know, papa. If it was not for that, I am sure I do not know what it could be for," replied Lillas. "I was trying to get about by myself as you wished me to do, and then I stumbled and fell, and I thought you would all have been sorry to see me so when you came home, and, instead of it, you were quite displeased. It is very hard, I think;" and still under the influence of temper, she began again to cry.

"Lillas, my child," said her father tenderly, drawing his chair nearer to her, and taking her hand in his, "you grieve me much. Your little heart is at this moment full of pride, and injustice, and evil feelings. How unlike is it to the spirit of Christ! Let us look into this matter together, my love, and may God of His mercy show you wherein your fault lies. It is He only who can do so. Last night, Lily, a new and holy desire seemed to possess your heart; you felt that you had been striving against God, and refusing to 'hear the rod, and Him who had appointed it,' and you were

sorry, and I well believe that it was with real desire to return and repent, and to walk henceforward with Him, that you spoke as you then did. I believe also, my love, that your request that I should leave you alone this morning, was dictated by the same right spirit; and I cannot tell my little girl what thankfulness it produced in my heart, when I found her actively warring against self, by giving up that which I knew it must have cost her much to relinquish."

As Mr. Hope spoke thus affectionately, and yet sorrowfully, Liliás turned round quickly, threw her arms round his neck, and, pressing her face against his shoulder, said in low tones interrupted by sobs,

"Yes, dear papa, I did care very much. I am so sorry I vexed you. Do forgive me."

"I will indeed forgive you freely, my child, for the sorrow and disappointment you have caused me. But let us go on, love, and see, if we can, why it was, and in what, that you failed. Pleased with the effort you had made, you began to think of it with self-elation; you did not therefore humbly seek God's help to lead you through the little privations and inconveniences which were likely to result from the loneliness, combined with want of sight, to which you had never before been exposed,

but you set about acting in an untried and new position in your own strength, and with self-confidence, instead of confidence in God. Now, had you been trying in a right and humble spirit to 'do the best you could,' and had, under these circumstances, stumbled and struck yourself, I do not think you would have got into a passionate fit of crying, and struck your poor nurse, and have been cross with me and Maud. Do you think you should?"

"No, papa," said Lily.

"I think you would have laughed, and jumped up again, and made another trial, and either with or without another trip, would have got out on the terrace, and pleased us all by showing us how well our precious little girl was getting on in her new learning; and, Lily, what else would have given our hearts joy?"

"To see that I was beginning to try to have fellowship with God, and to try to be happy without my sight, papa?"

"Yes, darling; that was it. But I hope I shall yet not be disappointed. I see that you are conscious of your fault, and I think you will try not to be so proud, and impatient, and petulant. But always remember that it must be 'by God's help,' and remember also, dear, that in such little trials

as that of this morning, you are more likely to be foiled, than if assailed by those of a much more serious nature. When a man goes out to battle with a mighty foe, who he fears may kill him, he buckles on all his armor, and sees that every piece is sound and in its place; but when he goes out to meet a comparatively insignificant enemy, he thinks not of doing so: consequently, he is often more injured and worried by the latter than he is by the former.

And so with us, we forget to buckle on the 'armor of faith' when we go to meet vexations, whereas if we know that we are to encounter afflictions, we bind on our panoply and are safe!"

Many earnest kisses had poor Lily impressed on her father's forehead and hands and cheeks from time to time, as gently drawing her nearer and nearer to his heart, he thus won her from her pride and anger. Truly he might have dealt with her sternly, for he was her father, and she was at the moment an undutiful child; but he would not thus have led her soul to penitence, and so to peace, had he done so, nor would such a course have been so accordant with our heavenly Father's dealings with His guilty children, for "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and He in him."

It was the hour of the pleasant evening meal on

the Lord's day, the commencement of which we have described. Tea and coffee, with fruit, cream, and other more substantial food, were arranged on a table spread with fine white linen, and shining plate and china, in a cheerful dining-room, that commanded an exquisite view of the sea, with its varied shore of beach, rock, and cliff, all now lit up with the glory of the evening sunbeams, for it was yet early. Mr. Hope and his three girls were seated round the table, Liliás as usual nestling close to her father's side, with one of his hands held fast in her own. This early tea-meal was always a favorite time with the whole party—their rather hasty dinner, and the services of the day, forming an excellent preparative for the enjoyment of the cake, fruit, and other light delicacies, which were always specially provided for the Sunday evening's refec-tion. Maud was presiding over the tea-table, and Mabel spreading some cream on bread for her little sister.

“O papa,” said Mabel, “did you see Meta and her sisters to-day? We did, and they looked so nice. There was a pleasing-looking lady with them, their mother no doubt, and they were so prettily dressed; all the girls wore *hats*, papa, true German

hats, and they had gray dresses with black ribbons. Did you see them, papa?"

"No, May, I did not," replied Mr. Hope; "it is a pity, but I must own the truth, I missed that great sight; perhaps it might be that I was not gazing about me. Do you remember what good George Herbert says?—

‘In time of service seal up both thine eyes
And send them to thine heart; that, spying sin,
They may weep out the stains by them did rise;
Those doors being shut, all by the ears come in.
Who marks in church-time others’ symmetry,
Makes all their beauty his deformity!’ ”

Mabel blushed, and Maud, who always sought to screen her sister, said, "But we followed them a little way, papa, and I dare say it was then that May noticed them, for I did not see them in church."

"No, Maudie," replied Mabel; "thanks for your kind excuse, but it was not so. I saw them come into church, and although I tried hard not to think of them, I could not keep my thoughts together, and I looked at them a great deal. I wish I had not, for I know it is wrong to gaze about at church, and I never can attend well, after I have once noticed any object that interests me."

“True, dear,” replied her father. “But I fear it is a fault to which we are all too much inclined; I mean that of giving divided attention, and allowing secular thoughts to creep in, and mingle with our most sacred services. Well may we pray, as that old woman of whom we lately heard did, that God would ‘gather up the wanderings of our frail hearts, and pardon them for Christ’s sake.’”

“But you know, papa, I never can attend to that tiresome Mr. Scott,” said Mabel; “his manner is so dull, and his sermon even more so.”

“My dear Mabel,” replied Mr. Hope, “you know I much disapprove of those strictures on the clergyman. There are few sermons from which you might not gain something, if you were to listen carefully, remembering that he who addresses you is Christ’s minister. An old lady of more than seventy once said to me, when I in my youth made some such remark as that which you have now made, ‘My dear young friend, I am an old woman, and have heard a great many sermons, but I never remember hearing *one* which had not something good in it.’ I must quote Herbert again to you:—

‘If all things else lack sense,
God takes a text and preacheth patience.’”

A pause ensued, which was broken by little Lily asking Mabel whether she thought the new people as attractive as she had at first.

“Quite,” replied Mabel, with animation. “One thing I can say for them, and that is, that they behaved better at church than I did, for I saw that they were as quiet and attentive as possible, only the little one glanced up at me two or three times, as if she recognized me.”

XIV.

THE DORMER FAMILY.

IN a small and rather shabby-looking room, fitted up with such ill-assorted and half-worn furniture as it is usual to find in sea-side village lodgings, sat the party which had so excited Mabel Hope's interest. A common Scotch carpet on the floor, scanty window-curtains, and painted chairs and tables, were all it had to boast ; and yet by some magic art this mean little room bore an air of elegance that struck you at once as remarkable. There is something in the presence of a refined and delicate female taste which has the power of turning even that shabbiest of places, a common, half-worn lodging-room, into a tasteful and pleasant-looking abode ; and so it was in the present instance. A gracefully arranged glass of wild flowers, two or three roses and lilies in a classical-looking little vase, desks, drawing implements, and books, decorated the room ; and an air of neatness in the arrangement of the furniture, together with the absence of all that litter of bonnets, and shawls,

and other out-door gear which are so commonly thrown off and thrown down on the chairs and tables of sea-side lodgings, gave at once the idea of a ladies' room—a place where intelligent people had passed the day. The party assembled in it did not belie the impression that the appearance of the room was likely to have made. They were the girls with whom Mabel Hope had fallen so deeply in love, with the addition of an elder lady, whose countenance, though mild and benign in its expression, bore tokens of a vigorous intellect and strong sense working within.

Margaret Dormer, the eldest girl, she who had been riding on the donkey, was resting on the couch near an open window. She was less pale than when the Misses Hope had seen her, but appeared to be in somewhat delicate health. Rosalie, the second in age, sat near her on a low stool, with a German guitar slung round her neck, on which she was striking a few chords from time to time as they chatted; whilst the two little girls, Emily and Blanche, were seated by the window, examining a store of pebbles that they had gathered on the beach.

“What nice-looking girls those were we saw to-

night on the beach, Meta," said Rose; "did not you think so?"

"Very—most attractive," replied Meta—"so amiable and bright-looking; I longed to speak to them."

"Well, we should in Germany," said Rosalie. "I do hate these cold English customs."

"And yet, dear, they have their use," replied her aunt, Mrs. Evelyn. "There are many incongruous acquaintances and intimacies made on the Continent, which would be avoided, if there were a little less freedom from restraint in speaking to strangers. Do you remember those people who so teased us at Munich? You know we should have avoided all that, if we had kept to English habits, and not fallen into chat, and then into intimate visiting, before we knew who or what they were."

"True, aunt," replied Meta; "there is good as well as evil in the custom of waiting for introductions."

"I wish we knew who they were," said little Blanche, the pretty-footed child of Mabel's eulogy; "I wish we knew; can't you guess, Meta?"

"Well, Blanche," replied Meta laughing, "it is an odd notion that I should be able to guess who strange people, in a strange place, may be; and yet

I am not sure but that I can. Do you remember Mr. Nugent Hope whom we met at Signora Rozzi's, at Pau, Rose? That tallest girl was like him, and I remember he told us that his father and sisters lived somewhere on the South Devon coast. I should not wonder if they were the Misses Hope."

"Right, Meta; I am sure you are right," replied Rose. "I saw a likeness to some one, but I could not at the time remember to whom. It was Mr. Nugent Hope, and she was very like him."

"How much I should like to know them," said Margaret. "I am almost sure they must be the Maud and Mabel of whom Mr. Hope so often spoke—'my bright May,' as he used to call her."

"And that then must have been that dear dog that Mr. Hope told me such a sweet story about," said Blanche. "You remember, Emmy, how he jumped from a boat, and picked up a little half-drowned boy who was just sinking, and brought him safe to shore in his great mouth, without biting him a bit. I was half afraid he would have frightened my Fata this evening; but if I had but guessed it was that good famous dog, I would have made him my best curtesy, and not have minded Miss Fata's shy looks. Next time I see him on the beach,

I will tell him that I have heard of his good deed, and respect him as I ought."

"Indeed, my child, you will do no such thing," replied Mrs. Evelyn. "In the first place, we do not know that these are the Misses Hope, or that the dog you saw was Neptune; and even if your sister's guess should prove to be right, we must wait until we are sure that our acquaintance would be acceptable before we offer it. But now, sing to me, children—sing, Rosie."

"What shall it be?" asked Rosalie; "a song or a hymn? Oh, I know what you will like, aunt;" and she began in a pure, clear, young voice, to sing that beautiful hymn of Schenk's—

"Wie sind die vor Gottes throne?
Was ist das für eine schaar?"

As she sang, Emily and Blanche drew near and added the soft notes of their childish voices to the strain, and before it closed, Mrs. Evelyn and Meta's also swelled the melody, until its last emphatic lines rose on the air with a power and pathos unspeakable—

"Amen, lob sei Dir bereit;
Dank und preis in Ewigkeit."

Would that the English showed the musical skill

and taste of the Germans. There, young and old, poor and rich, sing, and many sing well ; and why should not the English ?

Several days now passed pleasantly by, and the young ladies who were the objects of so much interest to each other, often met in the roads and lanes which encircled the village, or on the sea-shore, and never without casting furtive glances at each other. Margaret had ascertained that Maud and Mabel were the Misses Hope, and they in return had discovered the names of the strangers, and that they lodged at Cove Cottage, a small house not very far from their own gate ; but beyond this they had not gathered any information concerning them, save that they were likely to remain at Coombhurst during the summer.

Another week had escaped, and another happy Sunday passed over the heads of our young friends. Lilius had in some degree taken warning by her failure, and, adopting the advice of her kind and wise father, had given herself up to her elder sister's guidance ; Maud having undertaken to lead her about and initiate her by degrees into the difficulties of finding her way alone—a point which the poor child was now very anxious to attain. Naturally independent and eager, she had felt the affliction

which it had pleased God to lay on her more severely than a child who had been used to rely on others would have done. Rather delicate in health, she had been accustomed from her earliest childhood to flit about the fields and hills, either on foot or on her pony, with but little restraint; and although her education had not been neglected, it had not been allowed to occupy many hours in the day; or rather, we should say, that part of education which is of a sedentary character had not been allowed to occupy her for any length of time together, for, situated as she had been, as the companion of her accomplished father and sisters, education, and that of the highest order, had proceeded even during those very hours in which she was apparently employed only in out-of-door gambols.

Lilias' mind and intellect were of the highest tone, and her dispositions excellent, but as we have before said, the pride and self-reliance of her character, instead of leading her to strive against the results of the affliction which had deprived her of the independent powers she once possessed, had led her haughtily to reject all aid, and at the same time sullenly to resolve that she would make no effort to lighten the life-long trial that had fallen on her. But now a new spirit seemed to possess her. It

appeared as though her father's prayers for his child had been answered, and a new life implanted in her young heart—as if the Comforter had Himself descended on her, and brought submission to her rebellious spirit; and Lilius was now beginning to give evidence by her conduct, which was at the same time more submissive and more energetic, that a change was passing upon her.

“Maud, will you take me to my lessons again, as you used before I was blind?” she said, on the Sunday after the one the history of which we have before recorded. “I think I have not quite forgotten my French; and although I cannot now write exercises, I think, if you gave me the sentence in English, I could say it in French, and then you could correct it as I spoke; and there are many things I might do. You would not mind, Maud?”

“Oh no, darling! I should like it,” replied her sister. “When shall we begin?”

“To-morrow, if you can spare time; and I shall like to go on with music. Drawing must be given up—and, for ever! O Maud! (Lily had a marked talent for drawing.) Well, never mind—I must not begin to be sorry; and I shall ask papa to read history to me, and question me; and May shall teach me botany, and you will see I shall not be a

dunce at last. That is," added she, very gravely, "if God will help me; but I do not deserve that He should, Maud, I have been so very wicked. I had quite made up my mind that I never would try to do anything. And, Maud," said she, hiding her face on her sister's shoulder, "I have said such wicked things to God, and blamed Him for doing what He did, as if I could know what was best, and I have never prayed to Him since I got better and was able to think, except sometimes to ask Him to kill me at once, instead of letting me live on so blind and desolate. Will God ever forgive me, Maud? When papa talked so kindly to me, and told me what that little boy said, and that he would rather be blind himself than that I should, then all that sank down into my heart, and I became very sorry for my faults in refusing to accept what God thought best, and grieving you all so much. Will God forgive me, do you think, Maud?"

It was not easy for Maud to answer her, for Lily's earnestness, and sorrowful confession of a state of mind of which her sister had no conception, almost wholly overpowered her, and she was, consequently silent for a moment.

"You think He will *not* Maud?" she asked, in a startled voice, when she found that her sister did

not reply. "Oh, don't say so! I hope He will, and that I shall never do so again."

"Indeed, my precious child, I do not think so. 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' Cast all your care in penitence on Him, dearest. No one was ever refused forgiveness who sought it for Christ's sake."

"But it is such a long time—ten whole months that I have refused to speak to God, and looked on Him as my enemy."

"True, dear; but God is long-suffering, plenteous in mercy and truth. Return to God, and He will not refuse a penitent sinner. But be careful, dearest Lily; the Scripture says, 'God will speak peace unto His people, and to His saints, but let *them not turn again to their folly.*' Do not you let repining thoughts ever harbor in your heart again. If you feel them coming, turn away from them, and try, dear, never to brood over your troubles. Ponder God's mercy as much as you will, and think as much as you like of all the things you can do to lighten the trial, but never allow yourself to brood over the thought of your blindness, or to become morbid in your feelings about it."

"I will try, darling Maud," answered Lily; "I

thank you so much for talking to me. I fear I shall be twice the trouble in teaching, now that I have no sight ; but I will do my very best, and try to give you as little trouble as I can."

"But, Lily," said Maud, "I rather doubt what papa and the doctor will say to all this notion about study."

"What is all this notion about study?" said Mr. Hope, who had entered the room unobserved. "What! is Lily going to Oxford to join Everard in his rooms, and try for a double first?"

"No, papa," said Lily, "but I want to begin lessons again. May I?"

"No, my child, not yet. I must see you a little stronger before I have any set studies."

"O papa!" began Lilies, with a little of the old pettish look gathering on her face—"O papa! I wish it so much; do let me!"

Maud's hand was laid on her shoulder with a gentle pressure, and the word "*Remember*" breathed softly in her ear.

"No, papa, I forgot; I will not try till you see fit," said the little girl, making a strong effort to subdue herself; and, drawing Maud's head towards her, she whispered, "'Let them not turn to their folly.' Say '*Folly*' to me, Maudie, when I forget, and I shall understand."

XV.

FRIENDSHIPS ESTABLISHED.

WE must now introduce our readers to Mr. Hope's library, and a most comfortable room it certainly was. Wishing to unite his children with him in all his pursuits, the library, although nominally his own peculiar possession, and as frequently called "Papa's study" as it was the Library, had in fact become a sort of family sitting room, with these exceptions, that no visitors were ever shown into it except such as were specially invited for some literary or scientific purpose; and that no needle-work, or other such employment, had place there. If the girls liked to share his occupations, or to carry on their own studies there, they were always welcomed, but it was to be considered as a place for quiet retreat and study, and no one who sat there was to be interrupted by idlers. Here the whole family usually assembled for half-an-hour directly after their early breakfast, to read some given portions of the Word of God,

and converse on the sacred subjects thus presented to them.

Mr. Hope, himself well read in the Scripture, and his heart deeply influenced by its Divine teaching, was in an unusual degree capable of making this morning exercise useful and interesting to his children; books and maps were consulted, and the letter as well as the spirit of the Bible illustrated to them, and impressed on their minds.

It was on a day but a short time after the events which we have recorded, when, the Scripture lesson being concluded, and Maud and Mabel busy replacing the books which had been taken down for reference, on Mr. Hope's giving the signal that they were now disengaged, by ringing the bell, the letter-bag was brought in and opened. There was a letter for Liliás from her brother Vernon, and one for Maud, from some friend. Mabel was busy reading Lily's letter to her in a low tone near the window, and Mr. Hope deeply engaged in perusing a letter written on foreign paper. As he read, a smile of amusement passed gradually from his eye to his lip, and over his whole countenance.

"What is it, father?" said Maud, who, having just finished her letter, saw that that held by her father was from her brother Nugent. "What

amuses you so much ?—is Nugent's heart caught at last by some fair foreigner ?”

“ Oh, what is it ? do tell us, dear pater ; there is such a funny smile on your face—*do* tell us,” said May who had heard Maud's question, and leaving Lily's letter in the midst, had hastened to the table, and springing to Mr. Hope's side, began to peep at the letter which lay open before him, as he threw himself back in his chair laughing.

“ No, no, Miss May ; why should *you* get possession of the news, saucy child, before your better behaved sister ? Go along, monkey, and sit down.”

“ I know what it is, pater—Nugent is going to be married, and bring home some pretty little frisky Smyrniote, or some beautiful Italian Contessa, as his bride—now *do* tell us, papa—I know I shall like Nugent's choicce, whoever it may be.”

“ Well done, May !” said Lillias merrily. “ Nugent always used to like dark beauties, so perhaps he will bring home a little negro wife, with curly wool and white teeth ; and if he does, you will be sure to admire her if Nugent does, and we shall have to teach her English.”

“ Well, young ladies,” said Mr. Hope, “ when you have speculated quite enough to please you, you shall hear Nugent's letter. and judge for your-

selves whether anything in it indicates that your brother means to jump to the conclusion of his state of freedom, as aptly as Miss Mabel Hope can jump to a conclusion on his designs. The letter is dated from Constantinople, but instead of endeavoring to enlighten me, after the manner of tourists in general, on the appearance of the city of the Sultan, and the actual admeasurement of each of its mosques and palaces, instead of imparting to me his reflections on the Turkish government, or the religion of Mohammed, this is what he says:—

“MY DEAREST FATHER,—I write in much haste, being about to set sail for a tour in the Grecian Archipelago, but I have just heard that some friends with whom I became acquainted at Pau, and who I am sure you will like, are purposing to pass the summer months at Coombhurst, or in the neighborhood, and I must beg you all to become acquainted as soon as possible, as I am confident that acquaintance will, in this case, soon lead to intimacy and friendship. I am satisfied that my dear sisters will find both pleasure and benefit, from close association with”——

Here Mr. Hope paused and looked archly at Mabel—“What is the first name that rises hopefully to your mind, May?”

"Oh, the Misses Dormer, papa ! is it the Misses Dormer ? oh, do tell us, papa !" exclaimed Mabel, eagerly.

"What say you, Maud ?" said Mr. Hope. "Go back," added he, laughingly, putting aside Mabel, who had again tried to possess herself of the news, by creeping into his chair, and peeping at the letter ; " I won't tell you at all if you are so impatient ; there now, sit still, and I will read the rest—but I have not had Maud's answer ; are you as anxious that your brother's friends should prove to be these young damsels as Mabel is ?"

"Perhaps not as anxious, papa," replied Maud. "You know it is not my way to be so enthusiastic as May, but I do confess that I greatly admire those girls, and I have also taken a strong liking to the elder lady, Mrs. Evelyn I think they call her—their aunt, I mean."

"Well now, listen," said Mr. Hope. "'My dear sisters will find both pleasure and benefit from close association with the *Misses Dormer, and their excellent aunt Mrs. Evelyn.* Maud and Meta will talk German together, Rosalie and Mabel can botanize, for Rose, though younger than Mabel, is a clever little thing, and a capital botanist ; and you, my dear father, will delight in hearing their singu-

lar and touching voices joined in sacred song with those of our dear girls. Mrs. Evelyn will be an acquisition to you all; she is a sterling character, and with much originality of mind, and a heart softened and refined by the influence of sanctified sorrow. My poor darling Lily, too, will be the gainer by the companionship of two very sweet little girls, and if you all talk of me sometimes, why, so much the better. And now farewell—my next from classic ground.’”

We need not say that but few hours elapsed before Mr. Hope and his daughters presented themselves at the door of Cove Cottage, and as all parties were disposed to friendship, an arrangement was made for a sail together that very afternoon, which ended in the whole party from the cottage returning to take tea at the Grange.

It would not be easy to say when the first visit was ceremoniously returned by the Dormer party, for from that day forward such a continual interchange of visits and notes, German lessons, and botanical excursions, commenced, that it would be far too fatiguing to detail. Each girl found a friend, and all were pleased with each other.

Lilias was steady in her efforts to regain some of her lost power, and become able to look her

affliction in the face, and meet it bravely. Of course there were constant failures, and these were often followed by fits of impatience, and now and then of anger, which made her for the moment retract all her good resolutions, and throw herself down on the couch in the same rebellious and insubordinate spirit as of old, under which she had so long succumbed. But a new life was in her, and though the adversary did not fail to tempt and try her, and the evil nature within but too often yielded to his suggestion, yet the little girl was, by God's Spirit, enabled after these falls to rise again, and renew her resolves, and, by seeking fresh strength, to gain more and more firmness each day. Her health had now so much improved, probably in part from the happier state of her mind, and from the exercise and air which she now took, that within two or three weeks from the time her efforts first began, she was allowed to go to church, and, for the first time since her accident, the poor blind child once more sat and knelt beside her father in the house of God. There was trial in this, too. To be led into church, to be unable to see the clergyman, or to glance towards any of those friends whom she had been used to meet there, was a trial. But even out of this God brought good; for, on her return

home, she reminded her father of the passage from Herbert that he had quoted, and said cheerfully, "Then, papa, you see I have not to do for myself what you said—'In time of service seal up both thine eyes.' God has done that for me, and now I can never stare about the church as I used sometimes to do."

"True, my child," replied Mr. Hope. "Get all the good you can from your sore affliction; but you must try to control your thoughts, dearest, because they are as prone to wander off from the service as the eyes from the book, and though the poor eyes can never now supply subject for those wandering thoughts to rest on, they will find it in other ways if you are not careful."

"But now, come and we will take a walk in the garden together, until your sisters are ready for tea," added he, affectionately. This was always Lily's great delight, and, with a joyful assent, she took her father's affectionate hand, and the next half hour was spent among the sweet flowers, in pleasant chat with her beloved companion.

Margaret Dormer was, as Mabel had conjectured, not the sister of the children with whom the Hopes had seen her, at least not so by both parents. She was the child of Mr. Dormer by his first wife, an

Italian lady, who had died when her daughter was not more than two years old. Margaret had been entirely brought up on the Continent, partly in Italy and the south of France, and partly in Germany. When she was about four years old, her father married again, and the three young girls, and a boy, who was now at school, were added to his family. The second Mrs. Dormer died about two years before the period of which we speak, and Mrs. Evelyn, her widowed sister, who had for some years lived with them, took charge of the family. Mr. Dormer did not long survive the loss of his beloved wife, and had now been dead for about nine months.

After the death of her father, a severe attack of fever, brought on by nursing him, and by bitter grief at his loss, had led Margaret to the brink of the grave, and so great a degree of delicacy had been induced by it, that it had been thought desirable to take her for a time to her native land. They had therefore passed the last winter at Pau, and in the spring, Mrs. Evelyn, finding it necessary to come to England, had decided on taking up her abode in the sweet village of Coombhurst, where they might find quiet, and where she hoped in the enjoyment of the fresh sea air and lovely natural scenery which the place afforded, her precious charge would soon

recover her health and spirits. Meta had inherited a considerable fortune from her mother, but for the younger children there was but a small provision in the relics of their father's property, and as Meta was not of age, and all were requiring education, Mrs. Evelyn had selected this village as a place where they might live at little expense, and with much enjoyment. She had determined, with the assistance of Meta, to instruct the little ones herself, whilst Rosalie, who was sufficiently advanced to require such aid, was to receive masters from the town. Their only servant, Bertha, the German woman whom the girls had seen with the Dormers on the beach, had lived with them many years; she knew English pretty well, but when alone with the young ladies, she usually spoke German, in which she acted wisely, as her English was none of the purest, and her marked features and peculiar dress drew on her as it were but too much of the notice of the country people.

Such was the party with whom our young friends had begun to form an intimacy, destined to affect them all, more or less, and connected with the tenderest interests of all even to the end of their lives.

XVI.

A SUDDEN OUTBREAK.

“**N**OW, pater, I have a charming plan to propose,” said Mabel one evening, when both families were seated in an alcove in the Grange, enjoying a repast of fruit and cream, with a pleasure which belongs only to the young, or to those whose natural tastes have not been vitiated by worldly excitement and pampered appetites. “Now, all listen and approve,” she continued; “I propose, that as both Lily and Meta are ordered to live as much as possible in the open air, and as Rose and I like it, and all our friends would like to be introduced to the beauties of the country, and as a great many pleasant things would be sure to happen from it, I propose, I say, that the present august party should go once in every week, when weather permits, (you see my scheme is well digested, and takes in all contingencies,) to some beautiful place in the country, or by the sea, taking with us some dinner, and materials for tea-making, and so spend the whole day together, camp-fashion,

in any beautiful nook we may light on. Now, all who are for my plan hold up your hands."

"Capital!—carried by acclamation. I thought it would be," added Mabel laughing, as she saw every hand lifted.

"Well, May, if Mrs. Evelyn approve," said Mr. Hope, "I see no objection, and think it an admirable plan. What say you, dear madam? I fear you look a little grave on it."

"No, indeed, Mr. Hope," replied Mrs. Evelyn, "I like the plan much, but there are some difficulties which present themselves to my mind. In the first place, I think one whole day out of every week is rather too much to give to mere pleasure; my girls are very young, and lessons must not be neglected, although I am willing to allow a considerable degree of relaxation, especially when it is taken in the open air. Another difficulty is that I scarcely know how so large a party, and some of them so delicate, can be conveyed to the distances Mabel seems to contemplate; we have, as you know, no carriage, nor must we often indulge ourselves in the expense of hiring one."

"Well, my good friend," replied Mr. Hope, "the last named difficulty I can easily meet. We have a roomy Coburg, and there is the girls' little pony

carriage that will hold four, and then there is a rough pony that belongs to the school-boys, who, by the by, will soon be at home to join our parties, and I have my own horse; so between all these machines, alive and dead, I think we shall find it easy enough for us all to go comfortably, and a couple of servants into the bargain. I confess, however, I see the full force of your first objection; and yet I think a little modification of our plans might obviate that too. If we do not set out until twelve or one o'clock (according to the distance we purpose going), as we are all early risers, that will leave a respectable portion of the day for study; and if your young ones are steady and work well, a good deal may be done in that time; and, indeed, I should suggest that we only make whole-day excursions occasionally, and at other times take a very early dinner, and, starting directly after it, get a long afternoon and evening, and a pleasant tea-drinking in some quiet nook. Then, I think, we might also combine a little reading and intellectual pursuit with our jaunting. We could not be on the move all the time we are absent from home, so I propose that a couple of hours, after we reach our camping ground, should be spent in reading some volume of good history, criticism, or some other useful work.

Then a botanical lesson must form part of our day's business, and this can be carried on as we ramble about, and the flowers we gather will form subjects for us to analyze and discuss."

"Yes, papa," said May, eagerly entering into the amendments on her original plan, "and I can take my portable press and papers, and whilst you read to us, Rose and I can place our specimens in it."

"Very well, dear," replied Mr. Hope, "that can easily be done."

"And, papa," said Maud, "let it be a rule that each in turn should be prepared with some original essay, or tale, or poem, or some nice bit of translation to read aloud. No, not for us to read through! You shall read all, and so spare our blushes, and not let any one but you know whose paper you are reading."

"I suppose you will not wish to keep up your *incog.*," said Mr. Hope, laughing, "if you find your essay admired?"

"Well, we shall see about that," replied Maud, merrily; "probably not."

"That is a capital thought, Maud," said Meta, "and by that means we shall have not only a picnic of raspberry tart and chicken, but an intellectual pic-nie too, and we will all contribute—Mr. Hope and Auntie also."

"Yes, and we can do something," exclaimed the delighted children.

"Lilias shall make one of her pretty stories, and I will write it down for her," said Emily; "and the writing will be my share."

"And Blanche can translate one of Grimm's fables," said Rosalie. "I shall like that part as well as any of the whole plan."

The new idea was long discussed, and all the details duly considered; and, full of delight at the expected pleasure, the young party separated, all promising an intensity of study between the days of action, and on the mornings of those days—more easily promised than performed.

"I am truly glad of having made the acquisition of this new friendship and alliance," said Mr. Hope one day, when Emily and Blanche had been spending a long holiday at the Grange, and they, leading Lilias between them, had just left the room to play in the galleries and attic, which occupied the upper story of the house. He spoke to Maud, who was sitting alone with him—her sister being, as was of late usual, gone to walk with Rosalie and Meta.

"For Lily's sake, you mean, papa?" inquired Maud.

"Yes, dear; for her sake I meant at that mo-

ment, but I think it is good for you all to have such nice young friends. Liliás has been for so long a time accustomed to be made the first object with us, and to have no will come in collision with her own, that I rejoice in the opportunity of giving her some notion of social claims, and of the necessity of yielding to others. It is very good for her, poor dear child."

"I think it is, papa. It is good for us all sometimes to have ourselves tested in different ways; it is so easy to behave well when nothing interferes with our daily habits and likings, or for a time deprives us of what we have been used to fancy was all our own." Maud spoke rather sadly. Her father fixed a steady look on her as she rose, and, turning aside, began to make some little alterations in the arrangement of a group of flowers that stood near; but he made no comment, and Maud returning, resumed—

"But how nicely Lily goes on, papa! She is quite a different child from what she used to be—so obedient and gentle! and she seems to have got back her old energy of character, and resolution to conquer all difficulties. She really makes most wonderful progress, considering her great disadvantages."

“She does, my dear ; and I thank God for it,” replied Mr. Hope. “I do trust and believe that our precious child has received that new, imperishable life into her heart, which will in time purge out the old leaven. Yet she has, and will have, much to contend with before she has run her race. At present all is new and exciting to her, and she is ‘running well ;’ besides which, we have all been very careful in watching over her and assisting her. But there is still too much self-satisfaction about her. I shall not be sorry for the opportunity which, as I suspect, her intercourse with these children will afford of letting her see what is in her, and whether she has so fully overcome as she thinks.”

“You do not mean, that Lilius deceives us, or pretends to be better than she is ?” said Maud.

“By no means, Maud. If Lily deceives any one it is herself. We know that it is in the nature of the human heart to deceive itself—to fancy, when circumstances allow of all going on smoothly, and we are not tried, that we are strong, and incapable of acts which, when occasion offers, we readily commit. Lily’s pride is enlisted on the good side just at present. She feels that it is creditable to command herself and behave well ; and so it is rather a help than a hindrance : but it is not extinct, and

it must be, before she can walk worthy of her Christian vocation. The old man is alive and active in the heart of the dear child, although he is keeping pretty quiet at present. But he must be crucified with Christ, his deeds and ways utterly rejected, before we can be fit disciples of the 'holy child Jesus.' "

Maud did not reply. She was thinking; and Mr. Hope soon after left the room.

We will now follow the little ones to their play-room. Liliás, eager and earnest in all she undertook, had quickly and easily learned to make her way about the house alone; and as she thus gained exercise, and as her mind became less morbid, so her bodily health strengthened, and she was now able to run about and play with considerable spirit and strength. There were some games from which her want of sight, of course, precluded her; but there were others, where the ear had more to do than the eye, in which it was as much a matter of course that she excelled her competitors.

As the little girls went up the stairs, they heard the voices of the two boys, Vernon and Edward, who had returned home for the summer holidays a few days before; and summoning them to join in

play, the whole party proceeded to the long gallery together.

“What shall we play at?” said Emily.

“Oh, blind-man’s buff,” said Lily; and as all agreed, they began to bind a handkerchief over Vernon’s eyes, he being the eldest, with the view of making him the blind man. Meanwhile Lilius, of course not seeing what was going on, and concluding that as usual she should occupy that position, placed herself in the middle, and began to feel about for a captive.

“No, Lily, Vernon is to be ‘blind man,’” said Emily; “you must come out. Come and hold my hand, and I will keep you from going wrong.”

“No, Vernon, you can’t be blind man,” said Lily, pettishly; “I am *always* in the middle—of course I am.”

“Well, Lily, of course you are not this time,” said Vernon, “for I am the eldest; and I ask all if it is not the rule for the eldest always to be blinded first?”

“Certainly,” “Yes, always,” were the ready answers that passed from lip to lip.

“Very well,” said Lilius; “then I shall not play. I am not going to stumble about and get knocks for nothing; and if I am not blind man I will not

play ;” and she went and sate herself down on a stool, with a proud and sullen look on her face, quite unlike anything that had appeared there for a long time before.

“ Oh, do play, Lilies ! I dare say Vernon will not mind ; he will let you be blind man—won’t you, Vernon ?” said Emily, who was so fond of Lily that she could not fancy any one opposing her.

“ No, Emily,” said Vernon ; “ I see no reason why Lily is to have her own way in everything. I don’t care two-pence whether I am blinded or not, but really Lilies must not be so absurd ;” and he began to feel round him, and endeavor to seize his nearest neighbor.

“ *Fen play !*” said one, and then another ; “ we are not playing, Vernon. We cannot begin until this is settled about Lily.”

“ Why, what is there to settle ?” replied Vernon. “ She says she will not play ; and so let her sit still, if she likes it better.”

“ Come, Lily,” said little Blanche, “ do not be so tiresome. We can do nothing, you see, because you are so *contrairy*.”

“ Not *contrairy*, Blanche,” said Edward, laughing ; “ that is Devonshire. It is only nurse who says *contrairy*.”

They all laughed ; for, in her transit from German to English, Blanche had picked up some curious Devonshireisms, and used them at all times, without the least idea that she did not speak the purest English.

“Come, Lily,” said Edward, “we have had enough of this. Do come and play, and not be so silly.”

“I shan’t,” was Lily’s rude answer.

“Come, Lil,” said Vernon, who was a very good tempered boy, “I’ll give up. It is better to ‘give up one’s right than to stand up and fight;’ so I’ll give up, and you shall be head and chief, as you always like to be. Here,” said he, throwing off the bandage, and going towards her. “Poor dear, you do not need any bandage, do you?” and he stooped down and kissed her ; but Lilius, moved to passion by his remark, “You shall be head and chief,” struck at him, stamped violently, and bursting into a fit of noisy crying, ran down the stairs, leaving all the young party dismayed at her passion, and greatly vexed, for they had never before seen Lilius under the influence of her natural temper and proud spirit.

Lily pushed her way down the first flight of stairs, and there sat down, swelling with indignation, and

cried and sobbed more and more violently, until at last her voice reached the ears of Maud, who was passing near, and of Mr. Hope, who was in his dressing-room, and both came in anxious haste to see what was the matter.

“What is it, my darling?” said Maud, sitting down by her, and folding her arms round the child’s convulsed little form; “what has happened?”

But Liliás angrily repulsed her, and springing by her father, rushed to her own little room, (striking herself so violently against the door as she entered, as almost to fall to the ground,) and darting into the room, she bolted the door, and throwing herself on her bed, gave way to an agony of tears and passionate struggles.

“Leave her alone, my dear,” said Mr. Hope, seeing that Maud scarcely knew what to do; “leave her to herself. This is just what I told you must be. Liliás has quarrelled with some of her companions, and until her passion has abated it will be worse than useless to speak to her;” and drawing Maud’s arm within his own, he led her away. But a tear glimmered in his eye, and as he passed the dressing-room door, he dropped Maud’s arm and turned in thither, saying, “You must pray for your little sister, dear; we can no otherwise help her.”

XVII.

ANGER AND ITS EFFECTS.

THE children whom Liliás had thus suddenly deserted looked after her in silent dismay.

Edward, who was very fond of Lily, and always took her part, eagerly exclaimed against Vernon for having been, as he said, "so selfish as to hinder poor blind Lily from playing," and would have run after her, but Vernon withheld him.

Vernon was a fine, sensible lad of fourteen; ardent and vivacious in the extreme, but possessed of sound, clear judgment beyond his years. "No, Edward," said he, "I am very sorry for Liliás; but it is not either right or reasonable, that because she is blind she should be encouraged in all sorts of selfish and ill-tempered ways. I appeal to all whether I did anything wrong or selfish. I even offered to give up to Lily (though I had the right), and she was too proud to accept my offer. She always was a passionate, self-willed little thing, and now I think she will be worse than ever, especially if you all give up to her so."

"Indeed, Vernon," said little Emily Dormer, "I do not think Lilies is selfish and ill-tempered in general. I never saw her do so before, and I am sure she will be very sorry by and by. I did not know before that she was passionate."

"Because you have not thwarted her," replied Vernon. "I tell you that she always has been very violent and self-willed, and as proud as Lucifer. Now, you'll see by and by she will hold up her head, and look about her so grandly, just as if *we* had been to blame, and she the best girl in the world. Nobody ever caught Miss Lily confessing herself to have been in fault."

"Now, Vernon, there you are quite wrong," broke in Blanche. "It was only two or three days ago that Lily behaved so nicely when Maud found fault with her for something, and she said she was very sorry, and knew she had been idle, and would try to do better."

"Well," answered Vernon, "I am sure I am glad to hear it;" but he spoke rather scornfully, and as if he did not quite believe it.

"You're always against Lily, Vernon," said Edward.

"Now, don't say so, Edward," replied Vernon. "I love Lilies as dearly as any of you can, but it

cannot be denied that she is proud and self-willed ; papa and Maud both allow it ; and as to Mabel, she has no patience with her. I thought her much improved when I first came home, but to-day she is unbearable."

"I think Lily is improved though, Vernon, judging from what you say," replied Emily, who, although less impulsive and eager than Blanche, and certainly not a clever child, had, nevertheless, a fine thoughtful mind, and much power of quiet observation. "And I'll tell you why I think it is—Lilias has become more religious than she used to be, and that has made her more good ; but, then, when people are religious, you always expect them to be *gooder* than they can be ; and so, though Lily is gooder, you expect that she will never be naughty, and then you are disappointed and angry with her."

"Very true, little Miss Wise-head," replied Vernon, laughing. "There is something in that ; but you know the Bible says, 'By their fruits ye shall know them ;' and when I see persons who profess to be of the right sort bringing forth fruits of the wrong sort, then I think that either they are shamming, or else that there is not the power in religion that people say there is. For my part, I do not profess to be so religious as papa and Maud are ;

but if I did, I should expect that it would make me as good and holy as they are. Religion does not allow of pride and passion."

"But Lily is better, Vernon," said Blanche; "and she will be better and better. I know she will, because she prays to God, and tries to be good."

"Well, to-day is not much like it," replied Vernon. "But come, girls—come and play. What shall we do?"

Many games were suggested, but none pleased, for their power of enjoyment was gone, and at last they separated, Vernon going off to some out-door sport with his brother, and the little girls creeping down to Maud to be amused by her in the drawing-room.

And how fared it with poor little Lilies all this time?

Overcome by passion, she had fled, as we have seen, to her room, and there, throwing herself on her bed, she suffered the storm to rage unchecked, until its violence had almost brought down her bodily strength, and she became calm, save that a heavy sob now and then broke the stillness of the room.

And now, in this more quiet mood, Lilies began

to brood over the trials, real and imaginary, that lay on her. "She, a poor blind child, weak and delicate as she was, to be treated thus! Her brother, whom she loved so dearly, and who had last holidays given up to her in everything, to set himself against her so! Every one was against her," she said. "It was very hard on her, cut off as she was from so many enjoyments, that her own brothers and her little friends should never be willing to give up to her in the least thing!" And so she brooded on, nor strove to contend against the unjust and evil thoughts which arose, until she had, in more or less degree, included all those dear ones whom she, nevertheless, so intensely loved, (and who were at that moment, though she knew it not, engaged in prayer for her, and weeping over her in their heart,) in the same condemnation.

"Maud, if she had loved her as she used, would have followed her into her room to soothe and comfort her, and so would papa! A few weeks ago he would not have let her cry and moan by herself; he would have come and comforted her, and have punished Vernon, and talked to him well for such cruel behavior;" and here poor Lily, who in her anger had spoken her thoughts aloud, moved to fresh tears by her own foolish and sinful cogitations,

again burst out into passionate sobs and noisy lamentations.

A gentle knock at the door which opened from her father's room, and which was consequently unlocked, here drew her attention, but though she, on that signal, stilled her outward signs of emotion, she made no answer. The knock was not repeated, but the door gently opened, and Emily appeared at it, and, drawing softly near to the bed, laid her little head down by Lily's tear-swollen countenance, and began to cry.

Lily lay still and took no notice of her. She affected to sleep, forgetting that her noisy crying must have made her little friend well aware that she was awake. "Lily, *dear* Lily," said the tender child, "I am so sorry! Come down-stairs, Lily; the boys are gone out rabbit-shooting, and Blanche and I want you *so* much. We cannot play or be happy whilst we think you are so sad here by yourself. Lily," she repeated, "speak, Lily; I know you are not asleep."

"Go along, Emily, and don't tease me," said Lily; "I don't want to have anything to do with any of you; we were a great deal happier before you came here, and I wish you had never come;"

and again she repeated the same angry words that she had before said, "that no one loved her," &c.

"O Lily, don't say so. Indeed it was not our fault that Vernon was angry to-day. I can't bear you to say that, Lily," said Emily.

"Well, then, I can't help it," said the naughty and unjust child: "it's very true—Vernon was always kind to me last year, and now he is always cross, and I don't know what else it can be. Go away, Emily, I don't want you here; it is very hard I can have no peace even in my own room." And angrily repulsing poor Emily, Lilius covered her head with the bed-clothes.

During the latter part of this colloquy, Mr. Hope, unseen and unheard, had entered the room by the door that Emily had left open behind her, and had drawn softly near to the bed on which his beloved though naughty child lay. Motioning to Emily not to speak, he gently drew her towards him, kissed her sorrowfully, and leading her to the door, sent her down stairs, and himself returned and sat down by Lily's bed, who had again begun to utter the sort of wailing cry which children who have exhausted their strength, but not their passion and anger, are wont to utter. After a few minutes, hearing a gentle movement near her, she rose up on the bed,

and feeling about with her hands, said, "Why *don't* you go when I tell you? What makes you stay there, glorying over me in that manner? Go this moment," and striking violently in the direction whence the sound had come, her hand fell on the head of her father. Something in even that sudden touch showed her that it was not Emily whom she had struck; and passing her hand over his hair, she instantly became conscious of who it was that sat beside her, and that she in her passion had struck him.

Shocked and terrified, the poor child cowered beneath the covering, now thoroughly roused to shame if not to contrition.

"O papa, when did you come? How came you there? I thought——" but ashamed to add that she had thought it was Emily, and had meant to strike her, she suddenly stopped.

"I know, Lillas, you thought it was your kind little friend, who, seeing how much I was displeased, had by her affectionate and kind intercession obtained my leave to come up and see whether you were yet returned to your senses. But I doubted how you would receive her, and followed her that I might be at hand in case it should be as I feared."

"Did you *hear*, papa?" asked Lillas, blushing and distressed.

"I did, Lily ; and not I only."

"O papa, not Mrs. Evelyn—not Meta!" said she ; for Liliās was devoted to both, and to gain Mrs. Evelyn's or Meta's approval, was to her at all times an object of the most earnest solicitude.

"You would not have liked them to hear you, then, Liliās?"

"No, papa!" whispered she ; "*were* they there? Oh, don't tell me if they were, for then I can never bear that they should see me again!"

"They were not either of them there, my dear," replied Mr. Hope.

"Then who was it? You said not only *you* heard me speak to Emily. Was it Maud who was with you, papa?"

Mr. Hope gravely began to repeat some of the former verses of the 139th Psalm:—

"*'Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.'*

"It was One, my child, whom you have professed to love better than either of your new friends. Liliās, what has He seen in your conduct, of all those things which He loves, to-day? what has there been of gentleness, of meekness, of truth?"

"I have not said any untruth, papa," replied Lily, avoiding the other questions, to which her conscience indeed pleaded guilty.

"Look back a little, my dear," replied Mr. Hope. "Is it true that no one loves you? that no one cares for your happiness? Is it true that Vernon, that Emily behave *cruelly* to you? Do you really wish the Dormers and Mrs. Evelyn had never come here? these are things that you have said, Lily—are they true?"

"Oh, forgive me, papa," said Lily, now really humbled. "I did not mean it at all—at least I did mean it when I was angry, but I do not think so now."

"My dear child, when we give way to passion, and allow ourselves to harbor unjust and evil thoughts of others, we know not where we shall end," replied Mr. Hope. "Remember, my dear, it is not only of your family, and of your companions, that you have thought hard things, but of your God. It is *His* hand that has laid this trial of blindness on you, and every inconvenience or deprivation that arises from it must be traced to the same Hand. You have professed to be endeavoring to accept this dispensation, and all its belongings, to have oneness with God in His way

of trying, and instructing, and correcting you. How has it been with you of late, my child? I fear that, pleased with the improvement which there certainly has been in your conduct, you have rested satisfied with it, and having begun to think yourself a very good little girl, you have ceased to be watchful, and have trusted in your own strength. I do not ask for answers to these questions, Lily; answer them in your own heart, as in the sight of God. I will leave you now, dear; I hope you are sorry for your fault, but I must have some tokens that it is so, before I can restore you to your place in the family, or to companionship with those whom you have grieved and offended, by your passionate and overbearing conduct. Dear Lilius, what will Vernon, and Edward, and the others think of religion which seems to have no power over the heart and conduct? ‘Where is now thy God?’ ‘Is He able to deliver thee?’ will be the questions which irreligious hearts will surely ask, when they see the profession of godliness overcome by passion and ill temper.”

“O papa, papa,” cried the little girl, “I am so sorry, I see it all now. Don’t go, papa. I cannot bear to be left alone, and do tell me what I can do

to make up to Emily and Vernon for my naughtiness."

"You must take counsel with Him who will be to you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, my child. He will give you wisdom to see your way, and, I trust, grace to redeem your fault, as far as it may be possible. I can dictate nothing to you, but we will ask God to help you ;" and, kneeling by her side, the father commended his erring child to her heavenly Guardian and Guide, and besought that her sins might be blotted out in the blood of the Lamb, and that she might have strength and grace given her to walk in the straight and the right way. He then kissed his now penitent child and left her.

XVIII.

PENITENCE.

THE dressing bell had rung, and all had gone to their rooms to prepare for dinner, when Lillas rose from her bed, and after endeavoring, by bathing her eyes, and smoothing her ruffled hair, to make herself a little more presentable, she proceeded to feel her way to the room where her brothers slept. Her timid knock was answered by Vernon's opening the door. "Why, Lillas," he exclaimed, "is this you?" Lily, with a blushing and sorrowful countenance, felt her way to her brother, and though half ashamed of her own good resolution, threw her arms round him, and said with scarcely audible voice, "Please to forgive me, Vernon, I am very sorry."

"Well, wonders will never cease!" said he, in rather a provoking manner, for though an amiable and kind-hearted boy, his character was of so different a tone from poor Lily's, that he could not at all enter into her feelings, and could neither understand the struggle she had endured to conquer herself suf-

ficiently to come and confess herself in the wrong, nor appreciate the conquest she had gained. "Why, we shall have the sky coming to kiss the earth next," he said, "now that proud Miss Lily comes to beg pardon."

This Liliás could not endure, and turning away she burst into a fresh flood of tears, and rushed out of the room.

Vernon was vexed with himself, and ran after her, calling, "Lily!—come back, Lily!—I did not mean to vex you!" But Lily was gone, and again on her bed, sobbing as if her heart would break. Vernon followed her to her door, and begged her to come out to him; but poor Liliás, who was now drowned in tears, and almost in as great a passion as ever, could not speak, and Vernon went away, calling her "tiresome little thing," and cross both with her and with himself.

Dinner went on as usual, but although nothing was said about Liliás, a cloud seemed to hang over all the party, and the meal was far from a cheerful one. As soon, however, as it was concluded, Mr. Hope sought his child. He had anticipated, that as he had left her so sorrowful and penitent, she would have come to him, but finding himself mistaken, he went again to her room.

He found her in a very different state from what he had expected. She was still on her bed, pale, worn, and sorrowful, fairly exhausted by the violence of her emotions, but nurse was standing by her with her clean frock in her hand, and the little girl was just rising in order to be dressed.

“O papa! dearest papa!” said she, “I am so glad you are come. Leave me now a little bit, please, nursie, and papa will call you when he goes down.” And nurse having left them, she turned sorrowfully to her father, and said, “It will not do, papa—I have tried to be good, and only been naughty again.” And then she told her father of the effort she had made, and of Vernon’s mode of receiving her apologies. She did not blame Vernon, but she said that when she heard him call her “proud Miss Lily,” and speak so, all her anger came back, and “I got into a passion again, papa, and hated him—and I never shall be good—I know I never shall, papa”—sobbed the poor child.

“My dear little girl,” replied her father, “I think it possible that you have not tried quite in the right way. What did you do, darling, before you went to Vernon? I know it must have been a great struggle to you, with your naturally proud temper, to make that effort.”

“Yes, papa, it was ; and I thought Vernon would have valued it.”

“And admired you for it ? Yes, Lily, I think it might have been so. My love, did you ask God to give you true humility, and a deep sense of your sin, to enable you to bear meekly all the discomforts which might result from it, before you went to your brother ?”

“No, papa.”

“I think that was the mischief. You went more with the expectation that he would admire your magnanimity, than with a true sense of your fault before your eyes. And then, when you found that Vernon did not appreciate the effort you had made, you were angry. It was but another form of pride that led you to him, my child. Vernon was very wrong to receive your request for pardon in that taunting manner ; but if you, dear, had been duly impressed with the sinfulness of your conduct, if you had viewed it as God views it, you would not have been so easily repelled. ‘Consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.’ The meek and holy Jesus was not ready to take offence at a word, my child. If He who had no sin bore gently the taunts and harsh words of those to whom He had

done no ill, should not we try to bear patiently those which our own sinful conduct has called forth?"

Lilias was silent. After a time she said, "I see now, papa, that it was as you say. I did expect that Vernon would praise me for being humble, and I thought you would all think well of me for it. Now what can I do, papa? I was going to be dressed, and come down stairs; but I do not like it—I am so ashamed."

"I am disposed to think all this sad time of tears, and passion, and sorrow, has been as much as you can bear, my love; and I therefore advise that you go into nurse's room, and sit quietly with her, and go to bed early, and to-morrow we shall see what it is then right to do."

"But can I do nothing to-night to make them see that I am sorry?"

"You may send a message by me, dear."

"Yes, papa; will you tell them *all* that I am very sorry, and that I know I was very naughty and wicked, papa? and tell Emily that I did not mean what I said. No, papa; you must not say that either, for I did mean it then: I think I could have killed her, and every one of them. But tell her that it was only naughty, angry feelings that

made me say it, and that I *do* love her very dearly. And, papa, ask her not to tell Mrs. Evelyn—*do*, please, papa! I should not like her to know.”

“I believe it would be better not to ask it, dear,” said Mr. Hope. “You have committed a great fault, and acted very sinfully, and now your only course is to submit yourself humbly to all the suffering and discomforts which sin always brings in its train. Remember, Lily, it is not the opinion that others may form of us that should be considered: the grand thing is to have ‘a conscience void of offence before God, and before man.’ It is better, my love, when we have friends whose judgment we value, and whom we love, that they should know us as we are, rather than as we wish to seem to be. Leave all these things to be as it may please God, my child. If your little friends tell their aunt of what has passed, it will not deprive you of her love, especially if she also hear that you are penitent, and see hereafter that you are more watchful and careful to avoid offence.”

“Yes, papa,” said Lilies; “I see that, and I will try to bear the punishment patiently.”

“And now then, my love, I must go down stairs. I will give your message, and your sisters will come and wish you good-night. God bless you, my dar-

ling," he added, as, folding her trembling little form to his breast, he breathed a silent prayer for her.

"And God bless you, darling, best papa. I hope I shall not vex you so much ever again," said Liliás, fondly embracing and kissing him.

And Lily went into what had of old been her nursery, and took some tea, and sat still and quiet on the low chair which she used to occupy when she was a little child. She was sad, but so humble and gentle, and so grateful to nurse for everything she did, that the good woman was quite touched.

Presently a child's quick footstep sounded on the floor, and the color mounted to Liliás' cheek, and her lips quivered. It drew near to the little seat on which the blind child sat, and then two soft arms were wound round her neck, and a cool, fresh cheek was laid against her pale and heated one, and a shower of loving kisses fell on her. "Dear Lily," and "Dear, *dear* Emily, I am so *very* sorry," were the only words exchanged between the two little girls; and then Emily said, "I have brought up my new book to read to you—Mr. Hope said I might, and that I might stay all the evening up here with you, Lily. It is such a lovely book, Lily; shall I read? it is all about children who helped other people." And drawing a stool close

to Lily, whose aching head soon nestled on her shoulder, she began to read from that precious little book, "Ministering Children," until both little girls became so absorbed in the story, that all Lily's sorrows faded away ; and when her sisters came to fetch Emily, and wish Lilies good-night, they could scarcely believe that such a day of trouble had really passed over her head.

The plan proposed by Mabel, and received with such warm acceptance by the whole of both families, had not been allowed to sink into oblivion. Many and very pleasant were the excursions that they made together, and greatly did the young people enjoy the free associations which they promoted amongst them, as well as the new and lovely scenes to which they were thus introduced.

Sometimes these excursions were on the sea, and the whole party crossing the Bay to some one of the little coves, of which there are so many along that part of the coast, landed and there encamped for the day. At others, they contented themselves with shorter distances, and visited the nooks and corners, amidst their own more immediate neighborhood, exploring every cavern and cliff on the shore, and leaving the marks of their gipsy fires in many a picturesque thicket and copse.

A warm and earnest friendship had, indeed, sprung up between these two families. Each member of Mr. Hope's had found a friend; yet they were not coupled exactly as at first sight one would have expected to find them. Maud and Meta ought legitimately to have been close allies, yet they were not. For some reason or other, they did not seem to draw towards each other. Again, Rosalie and Mabel by age, as well as mutual liking for the same pursuits, seemed to have been, as is commonly said, "*cut out* for each other;" but, as we often find it in life, some sort of perversity seemed to prevail in this also. Mabel's whole heart was Meta's; Rosalie she liked, but in a much less degree than she did her elder sister, and consequently, though all these girls were much together, Rose seemed as it were to walk alone, belonging to each generally, and none particularly, whilst Meta and Mabel, Maud and Mrs. Evelyn, and Emily and Lily were united in couples, and Blanche, who was Vernon's idol, and the pet of every one, flitted from one friend to another, and was welcome to all.

But, although Maud was much attached to Mrs. Evelyn, it was a different sort of friendship which existed between them from that which united the

younger couples. Mabel's intense enthusiasm made her restless, if not continually in association with Meta. It was, as she had herself styled it, a "falling in love," her ardor for Meta was a *passion*; and although her love was well bestowed, yet, being excessive, it was injurious to herself and those round her. Emily's love for Lily was less vehement, but it burned a strong steady flame, and very seldom was it that a thought injurious to her little friend arose in her heart. She looked up to Lily, who was indeed a remarkable child, with a sort of reverence, as if she stood altogether on different ground from herself; whilst Lilies, although distinctly taking the lead in the friendship, was so well aware that Emily was more amiable in temper than herself, and highly to be prized for the truthfulness and integrity of her character, and for her remarkable freedom from selfishness, that she held her little companion in more respect than Emily could exactly understand.

XIX.

MAUD'S VICTORY.

"**M**AUD, my child," said Mr. Hope, one evening when he was alone with her, "there is something wrong with you; what is it, dearest? You will confide in your own father. Tell me, love, why do I see you so much alone, and so often sad?"

Maud started, and blushed. She had not been aware that she had seemed sad; that she had been so she well knew; but there was a whisper in her heart, that the cause of that sadness was not quite what she would like to own, and she would rather not have been called on to probe and analyze her feelings, or to speak of them. She therefore replied, half evasively,

"I did not know I had seemed sad, papa."

"Tell me, Maud, why you are not walking with your sister and the Dormer party. I heard them begging you to come with them. Why did you refuse to do so, dear?" asked Mr. Hope.

"I like better to stay at home, papa," replied

Maud. "It is more pleasant to me to be with you, or in the garden, now."

"Why now, dear?" replied her father. "You used not to feel so. No one used to enjoy a ramble on the hills or on the beach more than my Maud; but now you seldom join your sisters and our young friends. My dear girl, you must not think that I do not perceive the cause of all this self-seclusion. There is a wrong spirit working in you; shall I tell you what I think, dear? or do you yourself perceive and acknowledge it, and so save me the necessity?"

Maud answered not—she was too single-minded and true to utter a word that might imply anything different from what she really felt, yet she was scarcely prepared either to justify or to condemn the workings of her heart, if indeed she knew exactly what they were, and whither they tended.

"Dear Maud," said her father, "it grieves me to see, as I plainly do, that you are allowing yourself to brood over a secret, and, in a great measure an imaginary grievance. Your sister is wrong to permit herself to be so much, so over-occupied with any one object, as she is with Meta Dormer; but you know, dearest, it is a part of her character to be thus easily excited to affliction. We have often

spoken of it together as a trait which gave us fear for her happiness, and one which must be carefully watched over, and we have both done all we could to correct this disposition to undue devotion to any one object, however admirable that object may be in itself. I fully admit that Mabel is now devoting her energies and affections a great deal too much to Meta, and that to the neglect of other duties. But, my dear child, do you really think that Mabel loves any of us less than she did? Do you feel the least doubt that, although she has not enough self-command to break through the excess of which your heart (though not your lip) complains, the cool alienation of manner with which you treat her is exquisitely painful to her? Are you acting well, Maud, in thus encouraging in yourself these jealous and dividing feelings!

"Jealous, papa!" said Maud. "Surely what I feel is not jealousy; it is very natural that I should feel sorrowful, and mourn over having lost Mabel's love so entirely, and being now nothing to her, and comparative strangers everything."

"True, dear, if it were so it would be reasonable that you should feel sad and sorry; but, Maud, if you had lost the set of pearls that your beloved mother bequeathed you, what should you do?"

“Try to find them again, papa; and you mean that I have not tried to regain my place in Mabel’s affections?”

“Just so, dear. But if you missed your pearls, I think, before you pronounced that they were lost, you would make quite sure that they were not merely mislaid—covered up for the time, and out of sight, but as safe and as surely yours as if they hung round your neck, or were wreathed into your hair. Now, dear child, be satisfied to take my word that you are wrong altogether in this fear. Dear Mabel is impetuous, volatile, over ardent, and she has not, alas! as yet that only one thing that has power to give and preserve a right balance, an obedient subjection to God’s guiding and instructing Spirit. May our good God give it to her, lest she run after her idols too fast and too long. But *you*, Maud, who, I trust, are under the rule of that Spirit, should you not bear with this almost only fault of our dear one? Bear with her, dear, not to encourage the evil, but to lead her from it.”

But what can I do, papa? If Mabel is with Margaret Dormer, she is happy; if she is absent, she is always longing for the time when they shall be together. She does not like to talk of anything else, nor to do anything in which Meta has not an

interest, and so, when we are together, as I do not of course care to be always talking and thinking of one for whom I have no particular liking, Mabel gets tired of me, and then I am very unhappy," said Maud, the tears which she had long been restraining, beginning to flow down her cheeks.

"It is wrong, dear. I am very sorry for all this, and it pains me sadly to see my two girls, who have heretofore been but as one, thus separated," replied Mr. Hope.

"I wish the Dormers had never come," said Maud, earnestly.

"Nay, there you are wrong again, Maud. The providence of God brought them here, and led to our acquaintance, and it is quite wrong, because painful events ensue from any cause, to say that you wish it had not happened. It is no fault of the Dormers; they behaved very properly, and I consider them a great acquisition to you all. Yes, all, dear," he added, seeing that she was about to reject the idea as concerned herself. "Opportunity is showing you all what is in you, and but for the Dormers, opportunity would not have presented itself. The faults of which we complain in May were in her, but lacked opportunity to betray themselves; and my Maud must look at home, and see

for herself, whether this same opportunity has not been the means of manifesting in her any evil that before lay dormant.

“Let me ask you one or two questions, Maud ; you need not answer them to me unless you like to do so, but be fair with yourself. Have you been as kind and pleasant, in your manner and conduct to your sister, as you used to be? have you not rather repelled her, and refused to be anything to her if you would not be all?”

“Perhaps a little, papa,” replied Maud, with her accustomed candor. “I have felt being superseded so much, that I did not wish to seem to court Mabel.”

“Wrong again, my dearest ; never court great people, never court for gifts and riches, but court your sister’s love day and night, till you win it. Lay siege to her heart, storm it, take it by stratagem, anything to gain and hold that precious thing, a sister’s love. And again, court the sinner to win him from his sin, and if you see sin, or even *fault* in your sister, let her not rest until you have won her from it at any price. Yea, even at the price of that most treasured thing, so hard to part with, your pride.”

“O papa,” said Maud, almost reproachfully ; “jealousy and pride, these are strong words.”

"Tell me to-morrow, dear Mandie, when you have looked well into your own heart, with prayer that God would light it up, so that you may truly discern the nature of that which is within, that these two demons, pride and jealousy, have not had anything to say in the matter, and I will retract my words at once. But remember, my girl, that you, as May's eldest sister, and as one who has ever had and exercised the deepest and truest influence over her, will be called on to make answer before God for the use you make of that influence; and if you lay it up in a napkin, and refuse to 'put it out to usury,' you will reap the fruit of such neglect hereafter, either in this world, or in the next. Remember, also, that your father's heart is wounded by this division, and, O Maud, let it speedily be healed! Talk to your sister, dear, and let her talk to you of her new friends, let her feel as she has ever before felt, that Maud and Mabel are one; love Margaret Dormer because Mabel loves her, and Mabel will come back to you, and feel, if she does not say so, that her old and well-tried friend is of more real worth than any new one to her, and she will love you better than she did before. Do not let your sister's confidence and love become the property of another, as it surely will, if you chill it and reject

it as you have done of late. Walk with your sister and her new friend, study to unite yourself with them, and to throw yourself into their interests, and you will gain a true friend in Meta, as well as recall the fluttering affections of Mabel, and fix them more strongly than ever, by showing her that Maud's love and Maud's principles are not to be shaken by a breath."

Maud turned towards her father, bent her tearful face over him, and tenderly kissing him, whispered, "I will *try* ; pray for me, papa," and left the room.

From this day forward, a new era commenced. Deep and solemn were Maud's thoughts that evening, whilst, alone in her room, she endeavored to search out her heart, and see how it had been with her. She knelt and prayed for God's guidance, and then turning over the leaves of her Bible, to see what was the teaching of God's word, she opened at the beautiful 133d Psalm, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity !" and the sweet images of the holy anointing oil covering and sanctifying the whole person, of the tender and genial dew descending from above, and distilling from height to height, fertilizing all, and beautifying and gladdening hill and valley, came home to her heart. She felt how little she

had promoted this sweet unity of late, and well, yet sorrowfully, she pondered over her own great failure in Christian love and forbearance.

"God helping me, I will do better for the time to come," said she, as, rising from her seat, she again knelt by her bedside and asked for the strength which she well knew she must receive abundantly before she could, in defiance of an unusually proud nature, be able to carry out her intentions; and then rising, she put on her bonnet and shawl, and set out on the path across the grounds which she thought the returning party would take, resolved at once to begin her strife with self, and to court and win the return of the love she so dearly prized.

"Maud," said Mabel, as the party suddenly turned a corner and encountered her, "where are you going?"

"I was coming to meet *you*, dear," she said, affectionately, "I thought I should find you in this path. Where have you been?" and pleasantly entering into talk, she asked Meta to give her some wild honeysuckles she had in her hand, and wreathing them around Mabel's hat as she was wont in old times to do, she seemed to have suddenly lost

sight of the troubled feelings that had so long perplexed her, and to be herself again.

We may easily imagine the satisfaction it was to Mr. Hope to see his three girls together approaching him with their young companions, as he came from the terrace to meet them. Nothing was said; but he took Maud on one arm and Meta on the other, and led the way into the house with a thankful heart.

A deeper earnestness in the "God bless you, my ch'il," and the kiss he impressed on her forehead in return for her earnest embrace, when they separated for the night, was all that was observable in Mr. Hope's manner towards Maud: nor did anything further pass in words; but from that day forward Maud and Mabel were, as they had ever been to each other, the most loving of sisters, and Meta became, as she deserved to be, the friend and companion of the elder as much as of the younger.

XX.

HEALTHFUL PLEASURES.

A DAY towards the middle of August, it being Meta's birthday, had been fixed on for one of special enjoyment. It was to be a whole day of pleasure, and all were to meet at the Grange at nine o'clock before starting; and arrangements were made in rather grander style than usual in honor of this birthday.

The morning fixed on was most lovely, and gave promise of a perfect day. The air was so clear that every object seemed to beam forth with a depth and beauty of coloring such as is rarely seen. The sea, reflecting the blue sky, was like a lake of *lapis lazuli*, and the glittering little boats which a light breeze wafted blithely over its scarcely ruffled surface looked as bright as the golden flecks which adorn that beautiful substance.

Mr. Hope had a nice boat, and it was now lying on the little white beach below his house. It was in fact the property of Nugent and Everard, and formed their special amusement when they were at

home, for both were excellent oarsmen, and delighted in aquatic excursions, especially when their father and sisters had a share in them. In their absence, the charge of it was entrusted to a respectable old sailor in the village, who now stood ready, with the aid of his stalwart young son, to row such of the party as liked to go by water, or as there was a nice breeze they could put up a sail, whilst the rest, with some servants and the provisions, were to travel by an inland route, and meet the boat party on the scene of action. There had been much discussion as to where this "scene of action" should be; one had proposed Wastcombe, another Petit Tor, and a third had most urgently pressed that they should go and dine with the hermit goat on the Thatcher—that fine, shaggy rock which, together with its compeers, lying a mile or two off Hope's Nose, forms so beautiful an object from all parts of the neighborhood. But it was Meta's party, and she had been persuaded by Maud and Mabel (who seemed to have some private but weighty reason for desiring that it might be so) to decide in favor of Berry Head, which is the opposite headland to Hope's Nose, and forms the southern point of Torbay. Thus it was settled, all having come to the unanimous opinion that no place



“As there was a nice breeze they could put up a sail.”

Blind Lilies.



could offer to them greater enjoyment than that of spending a whole day amidst the beautiful and varied scenery that extends along that part of the shore between Brixham and the bluff headland which abruptly ends the coast in a sheer and precipitous cliff of immense height.

Blanche, Vernon, and Edward were all far too vivacious to like the idea of keeping still in the boat. If they went in the Coburg they could jump in and out and scramble about; and as Neptune and Fata were to go too, they all agreed that a scamper over the hills with them would be by far the best fun; and Mrs. Evelyn also preferred going by land, and Maud and Rose went with her to assist in watching over her merry young companions: so, with a pair of stout horses to draw them, the party were packed into the carriage and set out in high spirits.

Mr. Hope, Meta, Mabel, Lillas, and her inseparable friend Emily, went in the boat.

And now, which shall we follow—the boat, as it danced lightly over the waters, or the carriage, as it rumbled not so lightly through the stony Devonshire lanes and hilly roads through which its course lay, until at last the whole party thought it better to get out, and walk in happy scattered groups,

making hill and vale, and wood and coppice, resound with their merriment? Perhaps it will be better for us not to attempt to follow either party, for to recount all the adventures which befell either the one or the other would be more than we could venture to undertake. We should have to tell how Fata started a covey of partridges, which went up before her nose with such a startling whirr, that the poor little silly thing went away howling with fright; and that Neptune plunged into a little overshadowed wayside pond, and then shook his dripping locks over little Blanche, without the least consideration for her clean morning frock.

Then there were flowers collected by Rose for Mabel, and there were brilliant insects, which Vernon and Edward chased vehemently for a moment, and then left to flit onwards uninjured on their joyful course. All this, and more, we should have to tell of the adventures of the land-party. On the other hand, were we to attempt to describe the musical splash of the waters on the side of the boat; the measured flapping of the little sail, which had been hoisted as they crossed the bay; the brilliant clearness and calm repose of the deep blue waters which lay below and round the little boat, and the party therein; together with the grandeur

of the rocks which rose in beetling crags far, far above them, and here and there cast such deep shadows as to make the waters appear as of inky blackness ;—were we to tell of all this, we fear our readers would be tired of us and of our story.

We will, therefore, pass it all over, and landing our party at once on the pretty beach which lies nearest Berry Head, conduct them a little way up the hill-side, and seat them near the mouth of a deep cavern, which opens towards the sea, and here, on a carpet of soft turf, sheltered from the heat of the sun by the overhanging rocks, we will leave them to await the arrival of the rest of the party.

The plan for the day was for all to keep quite at rest in some shaded spot until after they had dined ; then those who were the strongest were to ascend the headland, inspect the remains of the Fort, which in war-time guards the entrance of the bay, and endeavor to get some specimens of the Goldilocks (*Chrysocoma Linosyris*), which, according to botanical books, is found only on that spot, yet, in fact (although exceedingly rare), it *has* been discovered in some other localities. Those who were not disposed for so much climbing were to amuse themselves amongst the rocks and thickets lower down, and all were to reunite for tea on intermediate

ground at about six o'clock. During their quiet time the plants collected by the land-party were to be examined and arranged; and Maud, who cared not for plants, at least not for those which had not color and fragrance to attract her, was to make a sketch. The boys had brought shrimping-nets, and the little girls were to amuse themselves as they chose.

It was not long before the land-party came up, and joined company with the rest, and soon the tin-case of treasures was in high request.

Margaret was an accomplished botanist, but her experience had been gained chiefly in other lands, and the wild-flowers of England were many of them quite new to her, and consequently full of interest.

"Oh, how lovely! What is this?" said she, as Mrs. Evelyn drew from her case a beautiful specimen of a bog-moss. "It is a *moss*, I see, but I never saw one of this kind. Look at those dark brown capsules—how pretty and urn-like they are, and how soft and silky the texture of those white tufted leaves!"

"It is a *Sphagnum* of some kind," replied Mrs. Evelyn.

"Ah! you have met with a bog," said Mr. Hope.

"Oh, now, Mr. Hope," said little Blanche, laugh-

ing, "you have had a peep at my foot and my muddy frock, and so you guessed. I stepped on the most loveliest green mossy place, and thought I was going to pick such a beauty-flower, and plump went I in up to my uncle in the black mud, and the cold, *cold* water made me *so*;" and putting out her pretty little foot, she exhibited it in such a state of disfigurement as a bog alone could have made it.

"Not up to your *uncle*, Blanche," said Lily, laughing, for she always greatly enjoyed Blanche's mistakes. "I do not think your uncle was in that bog."

"What do you call it then?—what is it in English?" said Blanche. "The knuckle of my foot I mean."

"Oh, your *anele*!" replied Emily; "but really it is almost your *knee*, Blanche—your whole leg is cased with that black mud."

"Well, never mind," replied Blanche, "up to my *Enkel*, and that's German for grandchild; so it was not up to my *uncle*, but up to my *grandson* that my foot went." And the merry child laughed heartily at her own joke, a laugh in which all the other children readily joined.

"But," said Mrs. Evelyn, "little girls should not be quite so self-confident and assured that they can

take care of themselves. When I was warning a certain little lady to be careful how she walked, and bid her follow me, she would not be guided, and now see the results. The only way to get through a bog dry-footed is to plant your steps on tufts of heath, or rushes, or on spots where the roots of grass or some other plants have fixed, and made firm hard places that will bear your weight. By stepping from one to another of these, you may get along very well; but those soft, tempting, mossy places, beautiful as they look, are not trustworthy. They are sure to give way beneath your foot, and plunge you deep in the mire."

"A tolerably fair illustration of life may be obtained from a bog," said Mr. Hope. "Those bright green and red mosses are lovely to look at, but they, like many a gay thing in life, 'allure but to destroy;' whilst the rugged and unsightly tufts of old roots, which afford such good footing, may represent some duties which, although they look unattractive enough in the distance, so as almost to make us shrink from undertaking them, yet when once fairly entered on in an earnest spirit, present one with a safe and not unpleasant path."

"But here is an old friend, also from the bog," said Mrs. Evelyn. "The asphodel (*Narthecium*

ossifragum), with its spear-shaped leaves, and spikes of golden bloom—that classic flower which the ancients considered as an emblem of immortality, and as such planted it near the resting-places of the dead. Pope says,—

‘By those happy souls which dwell
In yellow meads of asphodel.’ ”

“By the by, that idea is rather an odd one,” remarked Mr. Hope. “He forgets what an uncomfortable locality it must be for his heroes to dwell in; for as the plant grows only in black, boggy ground, they stand a good chance of looking somewhat like Miss Blanchadine the fair!”

“Oh, here is the sun-dew!” said Rose.

“Yes; both sorts—the long-leaved and the round leaved,” replied Meta. “Look at the glittering drops of dew which hang on the tiny hairs, one on each, like fairy diamonds. I wish we had a microscope.”

“That wish is soon gratified,” said Mr. Hope, drawing from his pocket a little portable instrument. “I seldom stir from home without my little friend, and much enjoyment have I derived from it.”

“How beautifully the globules of dew are formed!” said Rosalie, who, after having looked

at it, passed it and the microscope on to her sister.

"Yes, indeed," said Meta, observing it with deep interest; "each tiny hair is tipped with its own little crystal sphere, and each little orb reflects the hues of the sky, and the trees, and everything around it. What wonderful things!"

"Yes; glorious are thy works, O Lord God," said Mr. Hope; "yet we do not see a thousandth part of them: the wonders of creation are too many and too great for finite man to perceive or recount. We may get a lesson from this little plant; as it reflects the glorious light of the sun in its minute globules of dew, so should Christians be filled with the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and reflect every surrounding object only in the light and colors which that Sun supplies."

"But it is not wrong, papa, to long to know all about them, and try to find out all we *can*?" said little Lilies.

"By no means, my child—

' Desire that tends to know
The works of God, thereby to glorify
The great Work-master, leads to no excess
That reaches blame, but rather merits praise.'

So says our own great poet, and truly I agree with

him ; for though we cannot ‘ search out His works unto perfection,’ yet surely there is no subject that it is more desirable for man to study than the works of his Maker. But now I think we must leave off botanizing, or we shall have no time for our book.”

“ Oh, this *one* more, Mr. Hope !” pleaded Emily, who, with her hand locked in Lilius’s, had been intently listening ; “ this little pink beauty, with leaves like a tiny, *tiny* acacia leaf. It was creeping in and out between the long, pale moss, like a carpet for the fairies.”

“ Ah ! that is the bog pimpernel (*Anagallis tenella*),” said Rose ; “ how pretty it is !”

“ My own little precious favorite flower,” said Lily. “ Oh, how I should like to see it growing !” and a cloud of sadness overcast her features. But speedily recovering herself, she added, “ Never mind, papa ; I did not mean to say that.” And pulling her father’s head very close to her—for, as usual, she was his next neighbor—she whispered a few words in his ear, and then said aloud, “ You remember, papa ?”

“ Perfectly, my darling. May He help you to attain it fully,” was Mr. Hope’s half-whispered

reply, as he tenderly kissed her uplifted but blushing cheek.

The words Lily had whispered were "*Fellowship* with God, papa. I must try for *that*." And truly did the sweet child strive after it. This one thought before her mind seemed usually to be enough to support and cheer her under her great trial, and to have a compelling power over her. It was seldom now that Lily gave way to her petulant and proud temper; every one noticed how careful she was to check herself when she was disposed to answer hastily, often suddenly stopping when a few words had escaped her, and then after a few moments saying, "Well, never mind!" or, "I did not mean to say that."

Nor had she once, since the day the events of which we have recorded, given way to violence and passion. It was evident to all that a great change had passed on her, although she had yet much, very much, to conquer and contend with.

Joyful as was Mr. Hope to see that the discipline with which it had pleased God to school his beloved little one, was thus working in her "the peaceable fruits of righteousness," it was at times almost too exciting and touching to his sensitive feelings, to watch the struggles which his little blind

child had to maintain against her naturally proud spirit, and also with the repining feelings which necessarily arose occasionally, when the loss which she had experienced presented itself more forcibly than usual to her mind. It was painful to him also to see the look of sadness which, from time to time, rested on her countenance—to hear the low sigh which perhaps none other heard, yet feel that it was better not to notice either, and let her fight the good fight so far alone, only aiding her at such times by a prayer breathed from his sorrowing heart, to Him who is ever “touched with the feeling of our infirmities,” and who, he knew, both could and would give to his child the strength she needed.

Yet was Liliās not allowed to feel a lack of sympathy. Well did she know, that although her father and her other friends thought it wiser not to weaken her by over much expression of their affectionate and sympathizing feelings, yet that those feelings were in full and kindly exercise, and daily as she drew nearer to God, and was more and more earnest in seeking to walk with Him, so did she draw closer and closer in love to those dear ones who she knew were so tenderly, though silently, watching over her.

“And now, Queen Meta,” said Lily, recovering

herself, and speaking in a cheerful tone—"you are the Queen of the day—what are we, your subjects, to do next?"

"Well," replied Meta laughing, "I should say to dine, as I, for one, am very hungry."

"Ah, yes—and here comes Williams; to tell us that all is ready, I conclude," said Mr. Hope; and without delay the whole party adjourned to a lovely nook in which their refreshments had been spread, and there we will leave them to enjoy their pleasant meal and pleasant chat.

XXI.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

THE dinner over, the beautiful spot on which they had partaken of it was abandoned to the servants, who, with the two sailors, were then to enjoy their repast; and the whole party set forward, some of them to seek a new spot for the scene of their evening meal, whilst the others undertook the ascent of the headland.

As Lilius was not very strong, and as she could not, of course, derive pleasure from the grand and beautiful view which the summit of Berry Head commands, Mr. Hope decided that she should not attempt the walk, and, of course, as Lily did not go, Emily and Blanche remained with her. The boys went to the rocks for shrimping; and Mr. Hope, Mrs. Evelyn, with Meta and Rose, Maud and Mabel, all set forward in full spirits to inspect the fortifications; appointing for the servants and children to be prepared with tea, cake, cream, and fruit, by the time of their return.

“And be sure you fix on a nice place, Emily,”

said Maud, "where we can overlook all the wide sea."

"O yes," said Emily, "we will hold a council, and fix on a charming place, and have the tea-things all prepared, and the kettle boiling against you come."

And full of delight in the prospect, they at once set about gathering sticks wherewith to light the fire, and running hither and thither, fixing first on one spot and then on another, and dragging their heaps of sticks wherever they went, until they were quite tired and breathless, and obliged to sit down and rest, and wait until Williams and Bertha should have dined, and come to aid them with their advice and strength.

"I should like to tell you something that I know," said Lily to Emily, Blanche having run down to the shore to see what the boys were doing, "only it's such a secret."

"Oh do, Lily," replied Emily; "you know you ought not to have any secrets from me, because I am your friend, and you should tell me everything."

"I should like it," said Lily; "I long to tell you, but it is a great secret."

"So much the better," answered Emily, "I shall be sure not to tell. Do tell me, quickly."

“Well, then,” said Lily—“but do you think I ought to tell you, Emmy? I am afraid not, because it is a real secret, and Maud and Mabel told me I was to be sure and keep it so, and not tell any one. I really do not think I must tell you now. But I have a secret, and a beautiful one. Oh, how I should like you to know it!”

“You are very provoking, Lilius. Of course you ought not to tell if your sisters told you in confidence, and bid you not to do so. But you should not have said anything about it if you did not mean to tell.”

“No, I wish I had not,” said little Lily; “it was very foolish.”

“Of course it was,” said Emily, crossly; “and now I shall have no more pleasure to-day, for I shall only keep on thinking what the secret is; if people knew anything that they are not to tell, they should not keep on saying that they have ‘a secret,’ ‘a beautiful secret,’ and that they wish so much to tell. It’s quite as bad, or nearly so, as telling the thing at once, and it only makes people curious and uncomfortable.”

“Well, never mind, dear,” said Lily, good-humouredly; “I will ask Maud to let me tell you; but it is a secret even from papa.”

“ However, Liliās,” said Emily, who, although a remarkably amiable child, was unfortunately very prone to curiosity, “ I wish you had just thought a little before you raised my curiosity. You did it on purpose; I do believe you did, because you know I hate not to be told things that others know !” and rising hastily, Emily turned aside in an angry manner, and began to walk away towards the shore, hurrying her steps as she got further away, and found that Lily did not call after her.

Now, it so happened that Emily in her anger forgot that Liliās could not see her go, and that the turf was so soft and full in that spot, that it was probable she would not hear her light footsteps as she departed. Such was, however, the case. Her little companion was aware that she had risen, and gone a step or two, but that she had absolutely gone away she had not discovered.

Liliās, conscious that she had been wrong, and at the same time feeling some bitter risings of the old proud spirit which contended against her owning that fact, sat silent for a few moments; but after a short time of struggle, having obtained the victory for that time, she spoke in a pleasant voice and said, “ Now, don’t be vexed, dear. I was wrong to speak before I thought, and I do assure you it was only

that I so longed to tell you, because I like *you* always to know what I am thinking about, and to share my pleasure. Come, Emmy, come and sit down again, there's a darling dear;" but no answer was returned. Emily was then far gone, and poor Lillas became conscious that she was left quite alone in that strange place. She was sorely frightened at first; she knew not where she was, and having heard them all talking about cliffs, and precipices, and rocks, and having been in certain places most carefully led and guided, for fear she should get into danger, the poor child magnified the terrors of her position to her own mind and became dreadfully alarmed. In her first affright she uttered a loud scream, but no one heard her, and then recollecting the lessons she had received on presence of mind, and still more those which had of late so impressed her heart of God's all-guiding and preserving mercy, the poor little girl rose from the turf on which she sat, and kneeling down, besought God to keep her safe from harm, and make her patient and contented until He should please to send some one to her; and having done this, and felt the peace which ever follows a simple casting of our care on our God, she resolved not to stir a step until some one came, and seating herself exactly on the spot whence

she had risen, she began to strive to keep up her spirits in her dark solitude by singing hymns. Half an hour at least had passed and still Lily sang on, varying her song by an occasional German hymn which she had learned from her little friends. At length a step was heard approaching, and Liliás, sure that it must be some of her own party, left off singing, and springing up, said, "Oh, I am so glad. Thank God, you are come at last!"

"And who are you, my little one, who seem to know me so well, and to be so glad to see me?" asked a pleasant and harmonious voice, which, although it was new to the child's ear, she at once perceived to be that of a gentleman. "I never saw you before, my dear; did I?" said he.

"I do not know, sir," replied Liliás. "I do not know who you are. I thought it was my papa, or one of the servants, or Emily, or some of my own people."

"Why, my child," said her visitor, laughing; "I must be a very odd-looking man for you not to know, when you look full at me, whether I am your papa, or a servant, or a lady! Why, what is it, little girl? tell me how you came to be here alone, and whether I can take you to your friends."

"Oh yes; if you please, sir, pray do," replied

Lily. "I am afraid to make one step alone, lest I should fall down the cliff, or into the sea. If you will lead me to some of my friends, I shall be so much obliged to you;" and she held her hand towards him in the groping manner peculiar to those who walk in darkness.

"Ah, now I see!" said the stranger in a voice of the tenderest pity. "You are blind, poor child, and cannot see that neither cliff nor sea is near you. I think you must be Mr. Hope's little girl; but how is it that you are here alone?"

"Yes, I am, sir; I am Liliast Hope," replied she eagerly, "and I have been blind for more than a year. Emily Dormer was here with me, and she went away just now. I do not know where she is."

"But she should not have left you alone, my dear child," said the stranger. "I fear she is but a giddy guardian for a blind child."

"Oh, no, indeed," replied Liliast quickly; "she is very steady and kind, and generally takes such great care of me, and we are such friends. She never did so before; but I suppose she forgot, and thought Williams and Bertha would come in a minute; I assure you, sir, she is not giddy."

"Well, my dear," answered her new friend, "I will take Emily's character on your word. And

now," added he, "I suspect we are not far from some of your party, for I see a respectable-looking manservant, and a woman who looks like a *bonne* with them; are they the Williams and Bertha of whom you spoke?"

The greeting of Liliás and the servants showed the stranger that he was right.

"Miss Lily, my dear young lady, where ever have you a been to?" asked Williams with evident astonishment at seeing the blind child approaching with a stranger. "When I came to see the young gentlemen, and Miss Emily and Miss Blanche all down among the rocks together, and no Miss Liliás, I was in a fine way. Excuse me, sir," continued he, bowing to the stranger; "but Miss Lily's not able to make her way about like the rest, and when my master is to a distance, I feel answerable-like for her."

The gentleman now gave his name as Mr. Gambier, and said that he was a clergyman, and that as Mr. Hope was his near neighbor, and he had much desire for his acquaintance, he would walk on in the direction which he heard he had taken, and introduce himself; and, leaving Lily to the charge of her attendants, he proceeded to do so.

Meanwhile, Emily had suddenly remembered the

position in which she had left her friend, and abruptly leaving the other children, who called after her in astonishment at her rapid flight, she hastened up to the little glade where she had been seated. Great was her dismay when she saw that Lilius was no longer there. That she had found the right spot she was sure, for there were the flowers she had thrown down when she had left the place, and a little further on, and in the direction of a very dangerous path, lay one of Lily's gloves.

Emily's terror was unbounded. Thoughtless of screening herself from the blame which she knew she deserved for having left her alone, she rushed back to the shore in a flood of tears, and, shouting to the boys from a distance, she told them to come and help her to look for Lily, and then ran back herself to the spot, which was not far distant, in an agony of terror, followed by Vernon and the others. Vernon suggested that most likely the servants had found her, and taken her away with them; but Emily would not be pacified. She was sure Lilius must have fallen over some cliff, or wandered away in those strange places, and would be irretrievably lost; and all the sad stories of children lost in the wilds that she had ever read or heard of, seemed to rise before her terrified mind, and sitting down

on the ground, she moaned and cried, saying that it was all her fault.

Vernon was, however, more reasonable ; he persisted that it was most likely that Lily was safe with the servants, and that at any rate it was wiser to go and look for her than to sit there lamenting over imaginary terrors ; and, carrying out his designs, he ran to a high point at some little distance, and there saw that he was right, and returned with the welcome news that Lily, with Williams and Bertha, was very busy in getting out the tea equipage, and at but a short distance from them, and that they had better all join the party, and get Bertha to light the fire quickly, and boil the shrimps that they had caught in the pools at once, that so they might be cold by tea-time.

Joyous was the greeting of Emily and Lilies. Emily, whose displeasure never lasted long, and who besides had been too entirely quelled by her fright to have any remembrance of her having thought herself aggrieved, threw her arms round her little friend, and begged her pardon a dozen times, whilst Lily whispered, "I have not told why you went away, so do not you, Emmy, because they might be angry with you, and it was all my fault for vexing you."

"I have told them all," replied Emily, "and I am ashamed of myself, Lily. It was all my fault to be so cross, but I have had a lesson that I shall not forget."

"But never mind, Emmy, not for me at least. I got very comfortable after just the first, and then God sent some one to find me out. It was like sending the angel to Hagar in the wilderness, and really his voice was like an angel's, it was so sweet;" and beginning from the time Emily had left, she told her all she had done and thought, until "that nice Mr. Gambier came and was so kind. I shall like him so very much, Emily; I know I shall, and so will you, and papa, and Maud, and May. He is gone up the hill to meet them now, and I do hope he will come back to tea. But come, we must be busy—you lead me, and then we can both carry things, and we are to have tea on the grassy top of the old lime-kiln, such a pretty place they say."

And fully reconciled to each other, the little girls ran about from place to place gathering sticks and dry grass to make the fire, and receiving the different parcels from the baskets as Williams and Bertha unpacked them, to carry them to the place where they were to be used.

"Why, girls, it is of no use for you to rush and

run about so, you will tire yourselves to death, and not get through the work either," said Vernon. "Come, let us make a chain, and hand the things on from one to another. Here, Ned, you stand there, and, Bertha, you take the things from Williams and hand them on to Ned, and then Emily can take them from you, and pass them to Lily, and she can hand them on to me, and I will carry them to the ground. Here, Blanchie, you must help Lily, she will not be able to get on here without a guide."

Delighted with this new mode of management, the children worked most pleasantly, and soon all the contents of the hampers were placed together on the green sward, which carpeted the top of the kiln. Then the fire was lighted, and Bertha and the boys boiled the shrimps, and put on the kettle, whilst Williams and the rest of the party spread the cloth, and placed on it all the requisites for their evening meal; and just as they were all ready, voices were heard, and the walking party who had been guided by the smoke to the right point, suddenly made their appearance, and with them Mr. Gambier.

The spot on which the party had fixed as the most attractive for their resting-place, was indeed charming; a very large circle at the top of the

cliff, in which the cavern before named lay, had been surrounded by a wall about breast-high, the space included being from thirty to forty feet in diameter, and looking not unlike the low battlement of the turret of a castle. The ground within this enclosure was level, and covered with soft short grass of unusual verdure, and the wildly extended view which it commanded of the broad open sea on one hand, and of the lovely bay with its diversified shores on the other, and before them, was beautiful in the extreme. Brixham, Goodrington, Paignton, and then Tor, and Torquay, with its many hills all flecked with pretty villas, its crowded basin, and elegant spire, all lay outspread before them, and the immense fleet of fishing vessels that are always trying their trade at the mouth of the bay, gave life and spirit to the scene.

“Why, this is a ‘paradise of dainty devices,’” said Mr. Hope, as he entered through the gap in the wall, that admitted him to a sight of the pretty scene of busy children, and the pleasant-looking tea equipage. “What fairy directed you to this lovely place, my children?”

“Why, it was *really* a fairy, Mr. Hope,” exclaimed Emily. “It was little Fata that found it out; we could not think where her ladyship was,

when suddenly Williams heard her little voice barking, barking, and looking up, there she was, standing on the wall, and barking at a bird; so he came up to fetch her, and found out this pretty place."

The whole party were soon arranged on their grassy seats, and the large kettle having been pronounced to be boiling, the tea was made, and the pleasant meal proceeded most merrily.

Mr. Gambier was a very satisfactory addition to their circle. He introduced many new subjects of conversation which pleasingly diversified their usual routine, and this was agreeable. But it was in himself that the charm lay. There was a freshness and vigor about him that was altogether unusual, and so high and true a tone of Christian principle pervaded his conversation, that it gave harmony and dignity to all he said. He was young, not handsome, but gentlemanly and pleasant-looking, cheerful even to mirthfulness, yet never saying a word that bordered on levity. Mr. Hope was greatly pleased with him, as were all the party, and all were, therefore, heartily glad when they learned that he was no other than their long expected new vicar, who had arrived in the village but the day before.

"What is this I hear of you, Lilius?" said Mr. Hope, after they had been seated a short time. "How came Mr. Gambier to find you sitting 'all alone by yourself, singing Langolee?'"

"No, papa," said Lily, "I was not singing that, I do not know what it is; I was singing a hymn, I think."

"But why were you there alone, dear, in that out-of-the-way place? you should not have been by yourself; which of you was it that left her so?" he added, asking the question generally.

"I am sorry, sir," began Emily, blushing and looking distressed; but Lily hastily interrupted her, saying,

"I was in a very safe place, papa, and sat quite still. Emmy was with me at first, and then she went down to the shore, and I sat still, and sang till Mr. Gambier came."

Mr. Hope easily perceived by Emily's manner, and Lily's hasty interruption, that something had been amiss, but he kindly respected his child's evident desire to avoid discussion of the subject, and as he guessed that it must arise from a desire of screening her little friend from blame, he said no more, and Emily's relieved and grateful look would have more than repaid Lily for her forbearance, could she have seen it.

XXII.

EVERARD'S ARRIVAL.

“**L**OOK at that pretty yacht,” said Mrs. Evelyn, who had been for some time watching the sea. “What a beautiful little vessel! She is come in close ashore, as if to land some one.”

All were so intent on looking at the vessel (which had now put off a boat, into which a gentleman had stepped, and was being rowed straight to the rocks), that no one noticed the glance which was exchanged between Maud and Mabel, nor the bright light which illuminated their countenances, as they each took an arm of their father, and stood looking first at him, and then at the boat. But Meta, who stood by Lily, was very much astonished to hear her exclaim, “Oh, I *wish* I could see, oh, I *wish* I could see!” with great vehemence. “Oh, do tell me, is he coming, has he landed? Oh, I *wish* I could but see;” and then, overcome by her emotions, she began to cry. Maud left her father’s side, threw her arm round Lily’s waist, and gently

soothing her, whispered a few words in her ear, and then leading her towards her father, she said,

"Come, papa, let us, you and your three girls, go down and see whether we can find out who this visitor is. I think *I* have a guess."

"It is Everard, my own dear son," said Mr. Hope, joyfully, as he watched the stranger; and taking Lily between himself and Maud, Mabel hastening on before, they all made their way down towards the shore as speedily as they could.

"Why, Everard, how came you here, how did you know exactly where to find us, as if by magic? My dear boy, how rejoiced I am to see you," said Mr. Hope, as he warmly embraced his son.

"Ask the girls, sir," replied Everard, laughing, as he kissed his sisters. "It was their plan—they would insist on it that I should give you a pleasant surprise. I wrote to Maud that I should come by my friend Grosvenor's yacht, which was going down to Plymouth, and probably be in the bay this evening, so she and May set their young minds on your all meeting me here."

"Oh you silly girls," said Mr. Hope. "Do not you think I should have enjoyed the anticipation as much as the surprise? You young things do love

a secret. However, this is a very pleasant surprise, I must own."

"And, do you know, pater," said May, "I doubt whether you would have had a bit of enjoyment to-day in anything that we have done, if your heart had been all afloat with Evra; you would have feared being too late, and missing his first arrival, or not have had dinner till this time, for fear he should come in the middle."

"Get along, saucy child," said Mr. Hope, laughing. "There will be no bearing you, now that you have your 'Evra' at home again. You two always stick together like the two shells of a cockle, and fit each other about as well. But now, my boy, come and let me introduce you to friends of whom you have heard enough I suspect."

"Pretty well for that," said Everard; "as to May's letters, they speak but of one, but from you and the rest, father, I have heard of several, all of whom I long to see and know. As to May, I doubt not that I shall find, when I get home, that she has been 'abusing our young plants with carving *Meta* on their barks, hanging odes upon hawthorns, and elegies on brambles; all forsooth, deifying the name of *Meta*.' Hey, Mabel! is it so?"

"You can look about on the trees and find out

for yourself if you choose," replied Mabel, laughing; "but first see whether, at the end of the month, you are not as great an admirer of Meta as I am, Master Evra. But I shall run on and prepare them for your arrival, for I think our sudden charge down-hill, of which we gave not the slightest notice, must have astonished them all, and what they will all have thought of our emphatic embracing and kissing of the unknown knight of the yacht, I cannot think." And hastening on, whilst Mr. Hope and the rest paused a little to give her time, Mabel made the best of her way back to the top of the lime-kiln and soon returned, bringing all her friends with her to meet the party.

Introductions and first greetings having taken place, the meal, which had been interrupted by Everard's arrival, proceeded very agreeably. Everard confessed to being very hungry, and the hampers were ransacked, and obliged to give up certain relics of cold chicken and tongue that had remained from their dinner; and then Mr. Gambier admitted that he had had no dinner, having been rambling for several hours, with the intention of returning earlier; and so both young men ate and laughed, and became exceedingly friendly with each other and with the whole party to whom they had so lately

been introduced; for few things tend so much to breaking down the barriers of reserve, which is so apt to keep people back from friendship, as the frank out-of-door intercourse which arises when the seats are grassy, and the plates and cups scarcely enough for the party. Mirthful contrivances then take the place of conventionalities, and induce a degree of sociability which ordinary drawing-room life would be much longer in supplying.

But pleasant evenings will come to an end; and Mrs. Evelyn's calling Mr. Hope's attention to the lengthening of the shadows, was the signal for a speedy packing-up and dispersing. As all, except Mr. Gambier, were of one party, and as he was going to within a mile of the Grange, it was not a final dispersion, although a division of parties was to ensue, some going in the boat and the rest in the carriage, some of those who had come by water being to return by land.

Everard said he had had enough of the sea for one day, so he should go over the hill with his sisters and Meta. Mr. Hope being a little afraid for Lily to be so late on the water, said that he should like her to be in the carriage; and as it seemed that there was not sufficient room for all who wished to go by land in Mr. Hope's carriage, Mr.

Gambier asked leave to drive Liliás and her friend Emily in his pony phaeton, which he had put up at an inn about a mile off, by which the party must pass : and this being arranged, the boat was left to the boys and the servants. The arrangement then was, that the little girls should go as far as the inn in the Coburg, with Mrs. Evelyn, Rose, and Maud, whilst Mr. Hope, Meta, Mabel, and the two young men, walked so far. They were then to put Lily and Emily into Mr. Gambier's carriage, and fill their places with Meta and Mabel. This plan was highly approved by the young people ; but the usual mode of walking was abandoned ; for once Mabel and Meta were not side by side, but Meta accepted Everard's offered arm, and Mabel, who had her father's assistance in climbing the hill, was so busily engaged in chatting with him and Mr. Gambier, that, after the first few minutes of their walk, whilst they were all close together, the two parties did not exchange words with each other until they arrived at the place where they were to meet the carriage.

Liliás was delighted. She had her old friend and her new friend by her. She thought herself a little elevated by the dignity of being driven home by Mr. Gambier ; and above all, she felt that she

had conquered herself, and behaved well under provocation, so that a peaceful conscience, and a calm feeling of confidence in Him who had enabled her to do so, shed a holy and happy influence over her. And that sweet drive, and the kind and pleasant conversation with which Mr. Gambier beguiled the way to her and his other young companion, were never forgotten by the little blind girl, and took their place amongst the sweetest and most treasured records of her memory.

From this time forward Mr. Gambier became the constant visitor and companion of both families. The circumstance of the vicarage house being rebuilding obliged him to be in not very comfortable lodgings, and as he was as much within reach of his people at the Grange as in the farm-house at the other end of the parish, where he lodged, he was very often induced to share the family meals at that house, and to be there at such times as parish duties or the claims of study left him free to do so.

The first Sunday after Mr. Gambier's arrival was a day of much interest to all the inhabitants of Coombhurst, but to none more than to the families at the Grange and Cliff Cottage.

Poor Lilies was all eagerness; and when she first

heard the voice of her new friend giving utterance to the solemn words of exhortation with which our beautiful service opens, the little girl's heart was almost too full to think of anything but him who ministered. In a little while, however, she began to recollect that her thoughts should be with God, not with her friend, and making a steady effort, she was soon able to recover herself; and join devoutly in the prayers, and listen attentively to the Scriptures as they were read to them. Then came the psalm, and then her eagerness again almost overpowered her as she heard Mr. Gambier give out the text. Could it really be so? Yes, it was—the text was Lily's "own text," as she called it, from 1 John i. 3—"Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." Putting her hand into her father's, she called on him by an emphatic squeeze to share her pleasure, and then settling herself, with her poor sightless eyes raised as if she could see the preacher, Liliás delivered herself up to the new delight of hearing a solemn and affectionate setting forth of "the Word of Life;" a faithful account of God's message to man, that "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all;" that if we say we have fellowship with Him, we must walk as *He* walked in the light, having fellowship with Him

and with one another—subduing sin in His strength, and fighting against all that would oppose itself to Him and His rule—loving one another as brethren. All were full of thankfulness. There was something for all. The old and the young, the educated and the ignorant—none need have left the church that day without taking with them food for thought at home, and a something of comfort and instruction. The second service was as satisfactory as the first, and Maud and her sister brought home word from the school that their new pastor had opened the attendance with prayer, and examined the first class of scholars; and had announced his intention of doing so every Sunday, as also of visiting the day-school once or twice in every week. In his evening prayer Mr. Hope returned thanks to God for the great mercy vouchsafed them, and besought His blessing on their new rector's ministry; and then all returned to their rooms full of pleasant hopes and thoughts for the future.

The following morning found Mr. Gambier closeted with Mr. Hope and Everard, discussing plans for the good of his parish; and from that day forward, as he was of a very social temperament, and always found a warm welcome at the Grange, it was not to be wondered at that a day seldom

passed without his being there during some part of it.

He and Everard now became fast friends. Everard Hope was a growing Christian, though far from a mature one. In early life he had been so delicate in health that he had been much kept at home, and consequently had enjoyed the inestimable benefit of the watchful care of his pious and wise-hearted mother, and under her teaching had learned to see somewhat of the beauty of holiness, and if not to seek after it, at any rate to admire it. As time went on after he had been bereaved of her society and guidance, he began to turn with an affection and reliance even stronger than before to his father, and in him he found a friend on whose judgment he might rely, and in whose love he might confide, and consequently he clung to him with great ardor of affection combined with a more than ordinary depth of reverence. His whole heart was open to his father's eye; and although that heart had but too often wandered from its God, yet had it never turned from his earthly father, nor been disposed to set at nought his instructions or wishes.

But now a new era had opened in the life of Everard. For many months he had been evincing a desire to walk more closely with God, and Mr.

Hope hailed with joy the growing friendship between the two young men, feeling assured that in Mr. Gambier, Everard would find one who would prove a valuable guide and support, and who would be both able and willing to help him onwards.

Mabel and Everard had always been the closest friends. He was four or five years older than she was, but there was in their natural characters so much that was alike, that they had always been drawn very closely together, and been in the habit of the most confidential intercourse. But in Mabel, alas! there was not that love of God that now began to actuate her brother's motives. She respected religion, and at times used to say that she wished she was like her brother and sister, but she was conscious that she did not cordially love God's service.

She felt that they were right, but she could not find in her heart to join them; and yet she did not like to be left behind. It was painful to her now to see Everard, her own favorite brother, to whom she had always been the first object, finding a delight in things and conversation into which she could not enter; and at times she almost thought that she too must turn from the world and become one of

them. But this she could not do: no one can turn from the world merely for the sake of companionship with the godly, or seek God unless the Spirit of God draws the heart towards himself. Mabel was too true and candid to profess that which she did not feel; she was too well instructed not to know that the desire not to be left behind by others is not religion. Her father had much hope that the constant companionship of Meta, would be blessed to his darling child; but though Mabel loved Meta with an almost idolatrous affection, she had not been induced by her to take a more decided course.

Mabel loved Meta, as it were, *notwithstanding* her religion. She loved the fruits that the grace of God produced in Meta's heart and conduct, but she did not love the religion whence these fruits sprung; and although she listened to Meta's words with forbearance, because of the dear voice which uttered them, she often wished that her friend did not so frequently return to the one point in their conversation, and was always glad when an interruption of any kind occurred and put aside these more serious topics.

Mabel was ardent, affectionate, full of life and spirits, and so amiable and sweet-tempered, that all loved her.

Everard shared all these points of character with her, but he had sounder judgment, and a higher tone of principle.

Nugent more resembled Maud in his tone of mind : there was a solidity of character about him, combined with shining talents—two qualities which are not very often united in the same person—yet there was, withal, a peculiar intensity of feeling, and concentrated affection on any one object on whom his regard had been fixed, that almost savored of Mabel's characteristics. Nugent was slow in giving his regard, and reserved in speaking of his feelings ; but his love or friendship once given, was with difficulty uprooted, or even shaken ; and though his passions, and the expression of them, were well under control, he was one who would be likely to suffer more from any trial to his affections than many whose minds were of a different cast.

Maud had many of these points of character also, but she combined with them a pride of spirit, and something of a jealousy of feeling, that were far from Nugent's heart. Maud felt that respect and love were her right, and if she fancied that they were withheld from her, her spirit rose, and a cold reserve took the place of her usual tender and loving manner. On such occasions, she wept in secret,

but allowed no signs of her distress to be seen, if she could possibly avoid it. Nugent, on the contrary, received the love, which was in general freely bestowed on him, as a gracious gift to which he had no right. His humility was so great, and in such constant action, that he seemed to think he had no sort of right to claim any special consideration, and that it was not reasonable to expect that people would care about him; consequently, when he found that he was beloved by any one, it came on him as an agreeable surprise, and he accepted the distinction with gratitude and thankfulness, even if it so happened that he was not able wholly to return the affection in kind. If he fancied that he was disliked, he acquiesced good-humoredly in the circumstance, and appeared to think it was a natural thing that it should be so, and that he had no reason to expect it would be otherwise.

But notwithstanding this humble view of himself, Nugent Hope was not a man to be overlooked in society, still less to be disliked. Manly, intelligent, cultivated, with good sound judgment, and a remarkable rapidity of thought, which enabled him at once to perceive and combine the different points of an argument, and its bearings for and against a subject, his opinion always carried more weight with

it than that of most young men. At college he had been constantly turned to, in difficult cases, as umpire, and at home, even from childhood, what Nugent decided seemed always to satisfy contending parties, for all knew him to be both clear-headed and just.

Mr. Hope was proud of his sons, and, indeed, few fathers had better reason to be so, and he was now much rejoiced at having Everard, who had just taken his degree, and finished his academical studies, at home with him for a few months.

XXIII.

SANCTIFIED AFFLICTION.

THERE is no society more agreeable, than that in which a few families and individuals, all and each of whom have independent pursuits, enough to keep them from hanging too much on others, are associated in close and affectionate intimacy. Such was the little band of friends which met so frequently at the Grange, or at Mrs. Evelyn's cottage. The Dormers had found their country retreat so agreeable, and affording so many advantages, that Mrs. Evelyn had thought it advisable to take a small furnished house, and settle permanently at Coombhurst with her young party, who were all diligently engaged in pursuing their studies, and completing their education. Gordon Dormer had finished his career at Addiscombe, and sailed as a cadet to India, within a few months of their first arrival in the village, so that Mrs. Evelyn had now only her four girls to provide for. Nugent Hope had been expected to return home in the course of the autumn, but had been detained on the Continent,

consequently the two families remained just in the same position as when we first became acquainted with them, with the exception of the addition of Everard to that at the Grange, and Mr. Gambier, as the daily associate and friend of all.

The autumn passed pleasantly, and winter, never very severe in the favored climate of South Devon, was approaching. But winter has its charms as well as summer. In the house, there are the bright and cheerful fires which enliven our English rooms, and the pleasant long evenings, in which all are gathered together in the social circle, to recount and chat over the events of the day and the plans for the morrow and to enliven themselves and each other with some pleasant occupation or amusement—work, drawing, chess, or music. Then there is the morning walk in the clear cold air, on a frosty day, when every cottage and out-house roof glitters with its icy coating, and the long rows of icicles, which fringe every projecting eave and gable, on which the sunbeams glisten, until they look like thousands of diamonds.

How pleasant it is to walk along the crisp roads and fields, whilst the frost hangs in the air, and keeps all, where the sunbeams have not yet reached, bound in icy fetters; and to see the flocks of larks and fieldfares, of finches, and linnets, which scared

from their repast of hips and haws by your approach, spring into the air in dense flights, and settle on the next bushes, again to rise, as you again approach them, and repeat the same process over and over again, until they are freed from your intrusion, by some turn in the road hiding you from them. How pleasant it is too, to see the confiding little robins sit and carol as you pass, and to hear the rook caw over-head, as it wings its way to some spot where the sunbeams have penetrated the earth, and left the grubs which lie beneath the surface accessible to their long horny beaks. Then there are visits to the cottages to be made, and kindly plans for the comfort of their inhabitants to be discussed, and carried into effect. And all these things tend as much to intimacy, and have in them as much of the elements of enjoyment, as those pleasant summer excursions which we have described. So it was found to be by our young friends at the Cottage and at the Grange, whose friendship daily increased in warmth and closeness.

Mr. Gambier was a thoroughly industrious and hard-working man, and devoted to the well-being of his parishioners; and he had undertaken to initiate Everard Hope, who was preparing for holy orders, into the duties of a parish priest. by as-

sociating him with himself in his parochial work ; and Everard, whose heart was deeply interested in preparing himself to fill the important and solemn office of a minister of the gospel, was very thankful for the opportunity of working under the auspices of one whom he so thoroughly loved and esteemed. The greater part of his mornings was, therefore, passed in the village of Coombhurst, which lay about a mile from the Grange—that house forming part of a large hamlet belonging to the parish. He and Mr. Gambier usually read divinity together for an hour or two, then visited the poor and the school until about two o'clock, and after taking some luncheon together, they generally rode or walked for a couple of hours, Mr. Gambier often returned with Everard to share the family dinner at the Grange, and spend as many of the evening hours there as he could spare from other duties.

Lilias and Emily had both become very fond of Mr. Gambier, but the former, in particular, was deeply attached to him, and he was exceedingly interested in the little blind child. Many were the grave and earnest conversations which took place between them, but there was also a great amount of fun and playfulness constantly going on. Everard was devoted to his little sister, and often might

she be seen mounted on her pony, Everard leading it, and running full trot, whilst Mr. Gambier held her hand to give her confidence, and kept up by her side, Neptune and Fata and half a dozen other dogs chasing after and round them, whilst Emily and Blanche vainly tried to keep pace, and failing in doing so, cut across and met them at diverse points. Sometimes Emily got a ride, and sometimes Blanche, and Liliash showed the improvement that was going on in her character by often voluntarily checking her pace and making one or other of them take her place on the pony—an effort of self-denial which in former months she would not have thought of making; and, indeed, it was a great effort, for she was always so highly exhilarated and pleased by the exercise and the proximity of her “dear Mr. Gambier” and her favorite and merry brother, that there was no one thing that afforded the poor little girl so much delight as one of these wild gallops round and round the field and grounds. She had become so fearless, that the guardian hand which had at first been the only thing that would induce her to venture out of a walk was no longer needed; but she liked to have her friend so near, and he loved the child so well, that he still continued the attendance, and he was so fleet of foot, and of such

vigor, that he never got tired or out of breath with the exercise.

Mr. Gambier had a deep insight into character, and so much tenderness and tact, combined with such firmness and sound judgment, as was likely to lead to confidence, and Liliass's in him was unbounded. She never said much on the inner thoughts of her little heart, unless to some one or two: to her father and to Maud, if she was quite alone with them, she would pour out all her thoughts and feelings, and show all the workings of her sensitive conscience and peculiar mind, without restraint, but hitherto to no one else. Mrs. Evelyn and Meta, dearly as she loved them, and earnestly as she sought their friendship, had not been able to find the key to the secret chamber of her heart; she was reserved and restrained on such points even to them; but to Mr. Gambier it was not so. At once, and very early in their intercourse, the child talked easily to him, and when he found her alone, she would nestle in close by his side, and converse with him with freedom and earnestness, on points which were never discussed with others, and lay open her heart to him with a sweet and rare confidence that he greatly prized.

“What is my little linnet thinking of so earnest-

ly?" said he one day, when he found her seated alone by the fire, and so lost in thought that she did not notice his approach.

"Oh, dear Mr. Gambier, is that you?" she replied; "I am so glad—I was thinking about lives, and blind people, and having fellowship with God, and I am puzzled, and I should like to talk with you about it."

"Well, Lily, you have a large subject, or rather several large subjects," he replied, sitting down by her. "Tell me, first, what you mean by '*lives*.'"

"Why, I mean people's lives. I think the people who live on earth should do as blind people are obliged to do; now I do not quite know how to explain what I mean, but it is something like this: you know when you came and found me at Berry Head?"

"Yes, Lily, I perfectly remember."

"Well; I was sitting quite still, I did not know where I was, or how I should get away. I dare not move one step for fear I should fall over some of these places I had heard them speak of as we passed. I was safe at the minute, and obliged to wait till some one came to find me. So then I asked God to send some one, and you came. I did not know you, but I just told you what I wanted, and

you said you would assist and lead me to my friends, and you took me and turned me round a different way from what I had fancied you would go, and you led me over some rough place, and then you said, 'Now I must carry you a little way,' and then you let me walk again, and then you said, 'Sit down here, and I will come back in a minute,' and you seated me on a stone and ran away; but it never came into my head to doubt that you would come back, or to think you did not take me in the best way, or to ask *why* you let me walk in one place and not in another!"

"All true, dear," said Mr. Gambier; "but go on, and tell me all you were thinking."

"Well, then, I thought, I am having fellowship with this kind gentleman; I am letting him deliver me as he thinks best; I should have thought he would have left me where I was, and gone to look for papa, and sent some of them to me, but he would not have taken all this trouble and carried a heavy girl like me, and done all he is doing without a good reason, and so all you did I liked, and I felt a sort of pleasure that you should manage it all your own way."

"Well, my child, and what then?"

"Why, then, I thought, and I have thought about

it a great deal since, that it was like what papa had been saying to me about our having fellowship with God—something the same as you preached once, you know—it was your first Sunday. He read me a little paper one day, and it was on the text, ‘That we might be partakers of His holiness’ (God’s, you know), and he said the way to become so was to ‘cultivate fellowship with God in His designs,’ and try to understand the way in which God’s everyday dealings with us may most thoroughly work in us, to lead us to that holiness, so that if we would be holy, we must give ourselves up to God, and not only do the things which He bids us, but do them in the way that He bids us, and let Him do all He likes with us; the same as I let you lead me, and carry me, and set me down, and never said, ‘*Why* do you do that?’ And so I think if the lives of all people, from beginning to end, were like that of a blind person—I mean, if we all gave our lives and souls up to God to be led and guided by His Spirit, as a blind girl is obliged to give herself up to some friend to guide her steps, we should all be so safe and happy. Don’t you think so, Mr. Gambier?”

“Yes, dear, I do indeed. Now, dear Lily, that

confidence you felt in me was *faith*—you had *faith* in me.”

“Faith in *you*, Mr. Gambier! No; I had faith in God.”

“Yes, first in God; you prayed to Him that He would deliver you, and were at rest in the quiet assurance that He would do so; then I came, and your faith in God led you to believe that He had sent me. But then you had faith in *me*, that is, you believed that I should lead you, not only to the place and the friends you wished to reach, but that I should take you by the best and straightest way to them. *Faith* is belief. Faith is the same principle whether it acts on one object or on another. You may have faith in a foolish superstitious charm, or you may have faith in God. Faith is a firm belief that a thing is what it professes to be, and so you believed that I was a friend who could see, and would lead you right.”

“Yes, Mr. Gambier, I understand now. Then, if we have faith, real, true faith in God, we should give ourselves up to Him and try to consent to all He does and wills?”

“Just so, dear; the love that leads us to like that God should do His will in His own way, and to acquiesce in His will, and His way of working

in and for us, will follow on faith. If we believe that God in Christ is altogether lovely, that He is love itself—if we can truly feel, ‘Thy nature and Thy name is love,’ how can we help loving that which is love? And then, if we love God, we shall, as you say you did with me, ‘feel a sort of pleasure in His doing it all His own way.’”

“Yes; and that is what I am trying to do; I am trying to *like* to be blind, and the way I do it is to think, ‘God loves me, and of course if He loves poor little blind me, I shall not wish not to be blind. He made me so, and He could open my eyes if He liked, and if He does not, it must be best.’” And besides, Mr. Gambier, I did not love God before I was blind, and now I do, and so it shows that it is best.”

“‘It is good for me that I have been afflicted,’ has been the language of God’s people in all ages, and you will not find it otherwise, my little Liliás,” replied Mr. Gambier. “But now, my child, I have fallen into talk with you, and there are Evra, and the girls, and the pony, all waiting, and I promised to bring you to them, and I shall surely get a scolding; so make haste, and get on your bonnet and pelisse, darling.”

“Oh, what pleasure I have!” said Liliás. “Do

not you think these pleasant things are what is meant by 'the loving-kindness,' of God? *I* do," said she; and as nurse, who had been summoned, appeared to lead her to the nursery, and prepare her for her ride, she sprang up, and jumped, and clapped her hands as she danced away, with as much childish glee as if no such affliction as blindness lay on her, and no such serious thoughts had been under discussion.

Surely a thankful heart that can discern God's hand in all things, and sees a Father's love in all events, has a greater amount of enjoyment than any other. To such a heart a very small and simple pleasure will give greater delight than the wealth and treasures of a world, to one who has no such spring of happiness.

"My God, the spring of all my joys,
The life of my delights,
The glory of my brightest days,
And comfort of my nights!"

XXIV.

THE SCHOOL FESTIVAL.

WEEKS passed on, and Christmas drew near. Vernon and Edward were again at home, and all were full of fun and frolic, holiday and pleasure.

It was with great satisfaction and delight, that Mr. Hope observed a growing attachment between Everard and Margaret Dormer. He was well pleased that his son should obtain the steadying influence that a matrimonial engagement in many cases supplies; and that he should secure for his wife such a girl as Meta, so endeared to them all, and so justly deserving their love, was indeed a thing to be greatly desired. It would be necessary that they should wait a couple of years before they married, as until Meta was of age, and would receive her fortune, and Everard was in priest's orders, and had taken possession of a living that was to be his, they would have no means of establishing themselves in life; but a period of two years at nineteen and twenty-three is not much,

and as their relative homes were so near that they could often meet, the young people were not depressed by the prospect. Everard was devoted to Meta, and she to him, and the girls were all delighted to find that Meta was to be their sister.

One morning, as Christmas drew near, Mr. Gambier made his appearance just as the family at the Grange had sat down to breakfast, and willingly consenting to the urgent invitation of all combined that he would share their meal, he took his place, and opened the special business on which he had come so early. It was to announce that his school-treat and distribution of prizes was fixed for the next day but one, and to invite Mr. Hope and all his party to attend, saying that he had just secured Mrs. Evelyn and the Dormers, at whose house he had left Everard, who was going to walk with Meta, and bring her back to the Grange for the rest of the day.

Mr. Gambier's festival was no new idea to the party, only the day had not been quite fixed. It was to be an evening treat, in a nice new school-room, that he had begun on his first coming to the village. It had been well aired and warmed, and he had left the opening festival until this season, intending to combine the distribution of school prizes

and that of the women's benefit clothing club. There was to be a huge Christmas tree, and Liliás and her young friends had been delighting themselves in preparing all sorts of little things to dress it. The whole was to conclude with a tea-drinking to which all those children who had been regular and punctual in attendance had leave to bring one other member of their family. It had been decided that the day should not be fixed until fine and mild weather, giving promise of some continuance, should come, so that the guests, young and old, might not be injured by going out in the evening. Such a time had now arrived. For two days it had been clear and dry, with a mild wind, the roads and lanes were free from mud, and the air soft and pleasant; and as there was every probability that such weather would continue for some little time, the day had been at last fixed, and preparations on a large scale had begun.

Liliás had entered the room whilst Mr. Gambier was talking, and now eagerly exclaimed, "Oh, Mr. Gambier, you said Emily and Blanche and I should come, and help you dress up the room. May we come? *do* let us."

"That is part of my errand to papa, Lily. May they come—at least may Lily, Mr. Hope? Mrs.

Evelyn has promised for the others, and I am to drive over to fetch them all at nine o'clock, the day after to-morrow. Perhaps you will let nurse come too, as you know I have no proper attendant for little ladies; and I shall get farmer Crooks' cart sent over early that morning, for that load of evergreens and berries you promised me. Our Christmas tree will be splendid, for one of the men has brought me a holly, all laden with the best kind of berries, and twelve feet high, and its glittering varnished leaves, and bunches of red berries will make a most brilliant spectacle when lighted up. The sharp thorns, or rather spikes on the leaves, are so strong and large, that we are going to stick some of Mr. Groves' fine ruddy apples, of which he has sent us a great bag full, all about the tree. But I must not stay," added he, "I have a great deal to do, and but little time to do it, and at nine o'clock the day after to-morrow, God willing, I shall be at the door to pick up Mrs. Nurse and Lillas;" and with hasty good-byes, he left them all in high glee at the anticipated pleasure, and mounting his horse, rode off at full gallop.

The morning of the appointed day was most auspicious—a pleasant combination of clearness of atmosphere with softness of temperature, that held

out every hope of an unusually genial day. Lilius, who had been almost too much excited for sleep or food, could scarcely be kept steady long enough to eat a proper breakfast, so eager was she lest she should not be quite ready when her friend's carriage came. As it was, she was cloaked and bonneted full half an hour before the appointed time, and accused Mr. Gambier of being quite late, when, as the hall clock struck nine, he drove up with Emily and Blanche already packed into the carriage. Nurse and Blanche were to occupy the back seat, whilst Lily and Emily, delighted with the crowding which so many people and so many cloaks made in the carriage, were vociferous with pleasure, and wrapped their arms as closely as possible round each other, as they said, "to give Mr. Gambier a chance of sitting down in his seat."

Luckily they had not to pass many habitations, for the spirits of the children could not be kept down, and as the boys insisted on running, one at each pony's head, and laughing and chattering all the way, there was no small amount of noise. All had breakfasted, and Mr. Gambier therefore set down his load at the school-room, and promised to return as soon as he had put up the ponies; and the boys, having taken the vacant places in the carriage

for the fun of the drive, entreated so earnestly to be allowed to stay and help in the preparations, that on their promise of being eminently useful, and not teasing the girls in the least degree, they were promised a share of the sort of picnic dinner that the workers were to eat in the school-master's kitchen ; and as soon as possible, the whole party returned laden with baskets of flowers, evergreens, cakes, and apples, that had arrived from all the neighbors round, and all set to work in good style.

There were the wreaths to be made for the ends and sides of the room, for the schoolmaster's desk, and for every other place where it was possible to hang them. The Christmas tree was to be fixed, and the prizes and club articles arranged before dinner. Afterwards all the rest of the Hope and Dornier families were to join the party, and then the beautiful holly was to be decorated with the little things which had so long been in preparation for it.

Poor Liliás sadly felt her want of sight. As the others shouted out their admiration of each effect that was produced, and called on each other, and sometimes even, in the forgetfulness of the moment, on her, to "look at this !" and "Oh, do look at that !" her spirits sank, and she felt much inclined to cry ; but she conquered herself, and tried to be

busy and interested in weaving the wreaths, which she could do very well.

"Lily, *will* you come and make this wreath for me?" said Edward, just as the poor child began to feel sadly depressed. "I cannot do it, and yours that you made for Mr. Gambier just now is prettier than any other in the room. Do come, dear;" and Lilius, cheered by the kind word so aptly said, brightened up, and sitting down on a low stool, began to arrange the laurustinas and bright berries as skilfully as if she could see their varying forms and hues; and as Edward picked out and handed to her the different kinds, and gave her bits of string to tie them, and thanked his "darling, kind, clever Lily" over and over again, her spirits rose, and she was as merry as a bird.

It was a happy morning and a busy one. Work proceeded rapidly, and by one o'clock the room was gaily wreathed with bright evergreens and colored flowers and berries, the Christmas tree firmly planted in a huge barrel, the top of which was covered with mould to look like a large pot, and the room well swept up in readiness for the next act. Then ensued a washing of hands and brushing of hair under nurse's auspices, and then all the party adjourned to the clean new kitchen, with its sanded

floor and pretty casemented windows, where dinner consisting of a good piece of cold roast beef, and plenty of apple-pie and cream, mince-pies, and a grand hot plum-pudding, stood ready for the hungry and very merry party.

Six of the best school children had been allowed the pleasure of helping in the arrangements, and they were now to wait on the little party whilst they dined, and then to sit down with nurse and the other servants and share the remainder of the feast. At half-past two o'clock came Everard and Meta, then Mrs. Evelyn, Mr. Hope, Maud, Mabel, and Rose soon after ; and on their arrival the tree was to be dressed, the prizes arranged according to the classes, and the club goods all ticketed, so that there was abundance of work to be done in a little time, as the children and their friends were to be admitted at half-past four.

But of all this there was nothing that our little blind girl could do ; so, after trying in vain to keep out of the way of the busy people who were running hither and thither, she went and sat down in the kitchen, which was now empty, and in truth ran a great risk of becoming doleful if not unhappy ; for it is not easy, when all around are busy and happy, and after the spirits have been raised to an

unusual height, at once to sit down in stillness amidst a bustle that we cannot share, and yet be cheerful and contented. Poor Lilius did *try* to bear it ; but she felt it hard and sad to sit there in her solitude and darkness, unthought of, and as it were uncared for, and her little heart could scarcely endure the struggle.

But help was at hand. Just as she was on the point of yielding to her tears, a pleasant, dear voice sounded in her ears : “ Why, my little linnet, I had lost you, and I want you so much. I have something for you to do for me. Here, dear, are two nice little girls, little twin children, Lily, just ten years old, who have so lately come to the parish that they do not know our Christmas hymns, and it will break their hearts not to sing to-night, for they are both little singing birds. Do you think you could teach them the tunes ? ”

“ Oh yes, dear Mr. Gambier,” said Lily ; “ at least I can try, and I shall be so glad to have something to do.”

“ Then come in, little maidens,” said he, leading two clean, bright-looking children towards the fire. “ There, take off your bonnets and sit down by the hearth, and this little lady will teach you the hymns. Agnes and Grace Burton are their names, Lily ; so

now set to work, and try how well you can accomplish your task."

Lilias felt rather shy in beginning her task of teaching the little girls, but the feeling soon went off her. She was too much accustomed to singing to care long for the presence of strangers. She had a most tuneful and exquisite voice, and that pure, lovely taste so seldom bestowed, but which gives a far greater charm to singing than any that the best of masters can impart. Music was a passion with her, especially vocal music; and now was she charmed to find in these two village children a power almost if not quite equal to her own. She sang the air of the first hymn once over, and then said, "Now, try and sing it with me." The little girls began; one instantly dropped into a rich second, the other sang with Lilias, and scarcely in a note did either err throughout the strain.

"Why, you know it," said the little teacher.

"No, miss," said one of the little girls, "we never heard it before—did we, Grace?"

"But who has taught you to sing a second so nicely?" asked Lilias.

"I don't know, miss—I don't know what you mean. Agnes and I always sing like that, it comes easiest, and we like it. Father used to sing in the

cathedral, and so did my brothers when they were alive—in *parts*, they called it.”

“Then now, sing again,” said Lily, enthusiastically; “it’s beautiful—it’s like angels’ singing—I never heard anything so sweet;” and lifting up her own most powerful and lovely voice, she again began the hymn, her little pupils, now well accustomed to the notes, joining her with the most melodious young voices, and with as much energy as herself. So they went on; Lily taught them the second hymn, and then asked them if they could chant, and learning that they could, they sang the *Te Deum* and *Jubilate*, and then one psalm and then another, until, in their mutual delight, they seemed to have forgotten everything but singing, and were so taken up with it, that none of them either saw or heard that a whole group of people had gathered in the shadow of the door-way to listen. It was, however, time to expect the little guests, and Mr. Gambier making the listeners withdraw, himself came forward into the kitchen and stopped the concert.

“Oh, Mr. Gambier,” said Lily, eagerly, “they do sing so beautifully, they have such lovely voices, and their ear is as true as possible. It has been

such a treat to teach them, but they knew the tunes in a minute. I wish you could hear them."

"I have heard them, dear. Both you and they must remember, dear Liliás, that all gifts are from God, and that if He has given to you or to them a power of singing, it is not that you may be vain of it, or praise and flatter each other, but that you may use it to praise Him who has bestowed it on you. It is no more credit to you to have good ears and good voices than it is to me to have good eyes and good hearing;" and, so saying, he led the three little musicians to their respective seats, placing Liliás next her father, and little Grace and Agnes by their widowed mother, whom Mr. Gambier had invited as his own particular guest, seeing that her little girls had not been long enough in the school to give them a right to bring her, but that neither she nor they would be quite happy if she did not share their pleasure.

It was altogether a pleasant scene; the groups of happy children, rapturous with delight at the sight of the brilliant Christmas tree, laden with such fruits as hollies do not usually bear, and of which they were to be the joyful owners, and the gratified looks of the parents and relatives of the little ones, were all well in accordance with the ruddy flames

of the fine ashen fagots, which, in pursuance of an old west-country fashion, snapped and cracked on the hearth (for the room was not as yet quite complete, and the stove had not been placed), and with the bright light which illuminated the room. Tea was made in the kitchen in great tea-kettles, and poured into the cups, of which the little ones had each brought one, and large slices of cake were given out by the children and young ladies who waited on the little scholars; and greatly was the whole enjoyed. There were several of the neighboring clergymen and their wives and daughters present; amongst the rest the little Brights and Scotts, for whom Mr. Gambier was to provide tea when the rural part of the assembly had departed, so that, besides the other enjoyments of the day, the families from the Grange and Cliff Cottage had the pleasure of a social chat with several of their old friends and allies. After the tea, and before the distribution of prizes began, Mr. Gambier spoke a few affectionate and well-considered words of advice to all, and of commendation to those who deserved it, and then proposed that all should join in singing the good old Christmas hymn, "While shepherds watched their flocks by night," which was done with capital effect, and with great pleasure both to sing-

ers and listeners, for the children had been well taught, and they were strengthened and supported by the many sweet, and powerful, and well-trained voices of the Hopes and Dormers, all of whom were so highly musical. Lily's little pupils acquitted themselves much to her satisfaction, and after the singing was over, Mr. Hope asked them a few questions, and was much pleased with their answers, so much so that he agreed that when the spring came on they should be allowed to come once in every week to his house to sing with Lily, and receive from her and her sisters such instruction as might be of service to them ; but it was only on condition that his little girl should carefully avoid over-praise and flattery, and try to give them such teaching as might have a tendency to steady their minds, and counteract the evils which were likely to ensue to two children in their position of life, from so great a gift of music as these little creatures possessed.

It was a bright full-moonlight evening, and as the carriage could not conveniently take all, it was agreed that Mr. Hope with his two eldest girls, Meta, Everard, and Rosalie, should walk home, and his other guests having all departed, Mr. Gam-

bier proposed going part of the way with them ; and they all accordingly walked together, pleasantly chatting over the events of the day until a turning which led round to his lodgings separated them.

XXV.

SADNESS AND SYMPATHY.

THE next day brought new pleasures for Liliás. Gertrude, Johnny, and Josephine were to come and spend some days—they were to stay over Christmas; and when they went, Mr. Fraser, the late Mrs. Hope's father, with two of his grand-daughters, was to come for some weeks. Gertrude was so grown and improved, that the girls said they should have scarcely known her. She had been for more than a year on the Continent, with her uncle and aunt D'Urban and their children, and had so lately returned that she and Liliás had not met since Lily's blindness. Great changes had also taken place in the other children. Johnny had been at school in Germany, and Josephine also; they were now nearly eleven years old, and Gertrude nearly fourteen, and an entire change had taken place in their amusements and employments. They all spoke French and German, and great was the delight of the little Dormers to talk with them of the different things and places that they so well re-

membered. Liliás had picked up a good deal of German in her intercourse with Emily and the others; she had made Emily teach her sentences, and Meta had done all she could, by reading to her and repeating verbs, declensions, etc., until she knew them, to give her some ideas of the construction of the language; consequently, she could generally understand at least a part of what was said when the Dormers talked with Gertrude and the D'Urbans, and could even sometimes speak a little herself.

Gertrude, who was quick and clever, had learned when in France some kinds of delicate needlework, and she was in high request as teacher to all the girls. Meta, Maud, Rosalie, and Mabel, all became enthusiastic workers, and Emily and Blanche were also bent on learning. But poor Lily could not share the enjoyment of this new pursuit. It was long since she had so sadly lamented her loss of sight. Her sisters, the Dormers, and Gertrude were quite taken up with the discussion of stitches, and of shades of color in the silk and wool; and Lily, whose eyes no longer could discriminate between blue, and purple, and pink, and red, grew very sad as she heard them so eagerly prosecuting the work that every one said was so beautiful. Johnny found her one day sitting on the stairs, and crying.

“What is the matter, Lily?” he said; “why, you’ll be frozen to death sitting there in the cold—what is the matter?” Liliias avoided answering his questions—she did not like to tell him her sorrow, but still could not sufficiently check it to stop crying. “Come, Lily, don’t cry,” he continued, and unused to think of her as blind, he said, “Let us have a game of battledore.” This unthinking suggestion completed her distress, and exclaiming, “O Johnny, you know I cannot—I can never play again!” she started up, and ran hastily into the library, where, throwing herself on the couch, she sobbed as if her heart would break, exclaiming as of old times, “Oh, what shall I do, what shall I do?—I never, never, *can* bear it all my life.”

A hand, whose touch she well knew, was gently laid on hers, and she felt herself quietly raised up from the prostrate position into which she had thrown herself, and her head laid on Mr. Gambier’s shoulder. “My dear child, try to quiet yourself,” he said; “now calm those sobs and tears, and tell me what has so troubled my little friend.”

The surprise of being thus accosted, assisted Liliias in subduing her agitation, and she became more quiet, but she did not speak.

"Now, Lily, tell me what is the matter," said Mr. Gambier.

But Liliás was ashamed, and she said so in a whisper, and begged him not to ask her. It was, however, not long before her friend had drawn from her an account of what had occurred, and in her recital he was pleased to find that pride and temper had really little or nothing to do with the subject of her grief, and that he might venture to soothe, and try to comfort her, without the necessity of mixing reproof with his consolation. "Poor little girl," he said, affectionately, "your grief is very natural. Try to bear it, dear, for Christ's sake, and it will become lighter."

"But you know, Mr. Gambier," said Liliás, mournfully, "I have tried so long to bear it, and I thought that I should never feel the loss of my sight so very much any more. I know it is very ungrateful, but I do wish so very much to be able to work, and to see all Gertrude's beautiful patterns and things."

"I know you do, dear—I know you must wish it. But, Lily dear, I do not think it is ungrateful to wish it; but I think it might be ungrateful, if you were to let that, or any other wish, interfere with your cheerfulness, or with your endeavors to do

your duty. You must try to submit to God's will—to accept the trial in *all* its parts. But to be able to do this is not the work of a moment; you must seek earnestly, day by day, and not be daunted. When your enemy comes out as an armed man to meet you, what must you do, Lily?"

"Put on my armor?" asked Lily.

"Yes, dear, 'the whole armor of God;' put on especially 'the breastplate of faith and love,'—'faith,' that God does well in all that He does—'love,' O Lily, what will we not bear or do for one whom we love, and who loves us!" said Mr. Gambier, earnestly.

"Yes, yes, Mr. Gambier," said Lilies, eagerly. "For you, or papa, or Maud, I think I could bear anything. Oh yes! and God loves me better still than you do. Yes, indeed I will try again, try hard to have 'fellowship with God,' and like all He does."

"Do, my child, even more and more; and in the right way, with prayer—much prayer. But now, as all your young friends are busy with this work in which you cannot join, suppose you and I find something to do together. What shall it be?" said Mr. Gambier, cheerfully.

"Oh yes. How nice that will be," said Lily,

quite restored to cheerfulness. "You said one day, that you would read me some of Shakspeare. Will you now?"

"Yes, that I will," replied Mr. Gambier, "I will read you part of 'The Tempest ;'" and taking the volume from the shelf, he began to read that play, ever such a favorite with the young ; and soon the little party was joined by Johnny, who, having popped in his head, and heard what was going on, crept in, and was soon absorbed in the interest of the story. Then Vernon and Edward came to look for Johnny, and they, too, stayed to listen ; so that when at last the working party broke up, and missing Lily, came to seek her, they found the whole circle so intently occupied, as to have no thought for anything but Prospero and Miranda, and that lovely creation of the poet, Ariel, and were fain themselves to join the charmed group, and listen to the reader, until the play was finished.

From this time, Lilius was able to bear for the rest of the party to be engaged in pursuits in which she could take no share, and whenever she found that the talk was so exclusively of shades and stitches, as to afford no opportunity for general or more amusing conversation, she ran off to seek her father, or some one else, who might be free to at-

tend to her, or failing such resource, to amuse herself with the piano, or a chat with nurse. There were, however, very many hours in which the amusements were such as the little blind child could fully share in. Mr. Hope or Mr. Gambier occasionally read Shakspeare or some amusing book aloud, and then Lily listened with all her heart. They had also many merry games in the house, and pleasant long walks and rides. Nice music, too, enlivened them, and here Lilies was able to take her part freely, so that altogether the visit of her young friends proved very pleasant, and when they went away, it was agreed that Lilies should some day go with Emily, and spend a few days at Kingsford with them, Maud undertaking to be of the party, as guardian and helper to her sister.

On the last day of the year, came Mr. Fraser, and his grand-daughters, Helen and Robina Campbell, two lively girls, of about the same ages as Maud and Mabel. It was the first time they had visited their relatives, or had, indeed, been in England, and they were full of delight at the novelties they had seen. Of course they were all affectionately welcomed by the party at the Grange. Mr. Fraser had been a magnificent man, and his huge proportions, snow-white hair, and dignified step, at

first made all the inmates of the house, except little Liliás, stand rather in awe of him. She, poor little dear, saw none of these alarming symptoms; she felt the tender embrace with which the good old man held her in his arms, she heard the deeply breathed expression of love and pity with which he said, "Poor child, poor dear child, may our God give her better blessings than He has, in His infinite wisdom, withdrawn;" and she at once yielded her loving little heart to this affectionate friend, and settling herself on a low stool by his side, gave herself up to his companionship.

XXVI.

GRANDPA FRASER'S STORY.

IT was seldom that grandpapa was seen without Lillas on one side and Emily on the other ; for, fond as Lily was of her new friend, it was only when she shared him with her old one that she was quite happy ; and so the two little girls led him to the poultry-yard and the fish-pond, to the hill and to the beach, questioning him on the difference in things here and in his Highland home, and listening with the most intense and awe-stricken interest to the tales he told them of the mighty hills and wild districts of his native land, and of the snow storms and drifts which have such wonderful sway there. He told them of many poor creatures whom he had known of as perishing in the deep, deep snow ; of one family especially, who dwelt amongst the mountains. “The poor parents had one sweet girl of fourteen, who was gone to the town, which lay some two miles from her home, to purchase some provisions for the family against the Christmas day, which was now near at hand ; they

had also two little girls, nine and six years old, and they were gone to the village school, which lay not half a mile from their home in the other direction.

“It had been a bright, clear morning, but at noon the sky became overcast, and before dark a heavy fall of snow had begun to lie thick on the ground. Alarmed for their girl, who was to have been at home before dark, the father set out to meet her and guide her steps through the more difficult part of the path, whilst the mother prepared the evening meal, and put some dry clothing for the children to warm by the fire, knowing that they must come in wet and cold. At the time at which they ought to return, she set open the door to guide and cheer them by the bright fire-light, but they came not. Then she went a little way on the road to meet them, but in vain; and getting thoroughly uneasy, she closed the door of her house, and set off for the village, hoping that the schoolmistress had detained them until their father should come for them.

“Alas! when she got to the school she learned that the little ones had all been despatched to their homes almost as soon as the storm began, lest they should be unable to reach them when it had con-

tinued long. Struggling with the storm, and with difficulty beating her way through the deep snow, the poor creature hastily retraced her steps to her lonely home ; but not before she had roused some of the villagers, and induced them to go forth in search of her children. When she got to her shieling, the house was empty, the fire almost out, and her distress was increased by finding that not only were her little ones not there, but that her husband and Bessie were also still absent. Hours passed, but no tidings of either party were obtained. The villagers sought in vain for the poor little girls, no trace of them was found ; and wild with terror, the mother set out to seek her husband and other child. Mercifully, before she had gone far she met them returning. The father had found his girl lying by the side of the road, nearly covered with snow, and quite unconscious. He had taken her in his arms and borne her to a shepherd's cot, which happily was not far distant, and after many loving efforts, the poor girl's life came back, and the blood once more mantled on her cheek and lip. Then, though with difficulty, her father, assisted by the shepherd, had brought her home, knowing the anguish of distress in which his poor wife must be at their long absence."



“The father had found his girl nearly covered with snow and quite unconscious.

Blind Lilies.



"But, then, he did not know about the little girls, grandpapa?" asked Liliás. "No: though of course he could not. Poor, poor man, what did he do?"

"Worn out and wearied as he was, love, he could not believe that all had been done that might have been; so again he sallied forth, and long and earnest was the search he made for his two little lambs, but they could not be found. O children, it was an awful thing to see the agony of that strong, earnest man, his wrestling with his grief and despair, his endeavor to comfort his wife and his poor half-dead child, and then again the wild outbreking of his agony as he cast himself on his knees and called on his God to pity him and save his children. Never, never can I forget it."

"What! were you *there*, grandpapa?"

"Yes, darling. The schoolmistress told me of the loss of the children, and I could not stay in my home whilst such wo was on the mountain, and I might be a comfort; so I shared in the search for the precious little ones, and I saw and shared the anguish of the parents, for sweet little Effie and Lucy Graham were two of the dearest amongst the lambs of my flock: and surely they were lambs in the Good Shepherd's flock too!"

“But, Mr. Fraser, do go on,” said Emily.
“Please, tell on.”

“Well, love,” continued the old pastor, “’tis a dreary tale, and I would fain I had not begun to tell it. The night passed at last, and then the search was renewed, but still in vain. The whole road from the school-house to the cottage was cleared of snow, and one of the dear lost children’s little shoes was found, which showed that they had been on it, and then it was conjectured that they must have taken a wrong turn, and wandered far away, and been overpowered by the snow amidst the hills, and we were obliged to sit down and be still; and hard it was even to me. The snow lay heavy on the ground, and was renewed from time to time, so that more than a month passed sadly before we could have hope of finding the bodies of the little ones; and the mother pined away, and the father was wrapped in solemn wo. As Christian people, they tried to bend beneath the rod and kiss the hand that smote them; ‘Lord, Father, thou hast been merciful in sparing our eldest whom we had well-nigh lost; help us to say, ‘Thy will be done,’ said the mother, with streaming eyes; ‘but O my precious little ones! if I could but have had your

little bodies, and washed and dressed them for the grave, and sat down by them in my sorrow !”

“ ‘ Wife,’ replied poor Graham, ‘ He knows what is best. It won’t do to accept part of God’s dealings, and tell Him He would have done better if He had corrected us in a different way. ’Twould have lightened the load to have looked on their dear little faces and given them solemn burial ; but if our Father sees a needs-be that we should bear the whole load, let us *try*, my dear, to take it as it is, and say to all, “ It is well.” O Effie, ’tis indeed a bitter cup ; but our Saviour drank a bitterer for us, and drank it to the dregs, and He will help us through.’ ”

“ Few people who had seen that cottar and his blithe wife on the morning of that snow-storm would have recognized them, Lily, at the end of the month from that day—so worn, so thin, so wo-stricken were they. Yet did their faith grow day by day ; and to look on them, sorrowful as they were, it was plain to see that they had a strength and consolation such as neither man nor angel can attain to, save from the teaching of the Holy Comforter.

“ It was on the first of February, between five and six weeks after their affliction had fallen upon

them, that a thaw and heavy rain set in, and lasted two days; and then the snow melted away, and on the third morning the sun shone forth in its glory. Then together the parents went forth to renew their search."

"And did they find the dear children, grandpa? oh, *did* they find them alive?"

"They had not walked ten yards from their cottage, Liliās—nay, they had not left their own little garden, when, turning round, the mother's quick eye discovered a red and blue thing lying on the ground. She sprang towards it as it lay under the hedge, and just but a few yards from the end window of the house, and there lying on the bank, wrapt in each other's arms, lay the two dead children, as calm, as fair, and their sweet faces as undisturbed, as if sleep and not death had stretched them there. The sun shone full on the little corpses, the birds twittered on the tree above them, and there they lay—Effie, the eldest, with her little cloak pulled from her own neck to be folded over little Lucy, whose golden curls lay glittering on the neck and bosom of her elder sister. Effie had but one shoe on, but it was Lucy's that had been found; and on looking at the little feet, it was seen that Effie had put hers on her sister's foot, and gone

without herself. It was a sad sight, darlings; I don't know how we all bore it."

"And so the poor mother had the dear little bodies at last! Sometimes it is so, grandpa, when people have got to be patient, and to say, 'Thy will be done,' and to be ready to bear *all* the trial, that God takes away part of it, and turns some other part of it into a pleasure, that so at last one sees so much that is good and pleasant, that one seems almost to like the thing that has been such a trouble—not that these poor people could ever have *liked* to lose little Effie and Luey."

"No, my child," replied Mr. Fraser, "they could not like the trial in itself, and for its own sake. You know, dear, it is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews, 'Now, no affliction for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous.' It is afterwards, when, if in times of trouble we sow to the Spirit, we are reaping the holy harvest of the peaceable fruits of righteousness, that we find the benefit of adversity—sanctified adversity, I should say. In the time of trial, if we are enabled to say, 'Thy will be done,' and accept God's dealings with us, not anxious that He should take away our trial, but submitting ourselves to His will, meekly and humbly—then I think we are in the position in

which God would have us, and that He does not call on us to like the discipline itself."

"I am so glad to hear you say so, dearest grandpapa. I have tried so hard to like my blindness, and yet I cannot; and sometimes I feel as if it was very wrong to feel as I do how much I should like to see them all, and all the beautiful sunshine, and flowers, and butterflies, in the summer, and those fine old dark trunks and branches of the trees, that I used to like so very much, when the green ivy and gray and yellow lichens were on them! I feel it so much sometimes, grandpapa; and then I try to make out to myself that it is pleasant to be blind, and to like it because God did it, but I do not succeed, and that makes me sad sometimes."

"Do not let it make you sad, darling; try and pray that you may learn to be quite contented and happy in your blindness, but do not vex yourself by striving after that which was never intended. My child, we are told to be content with such things as we have, not because we have them, but because they are what God has given us. To be ready to have a thing or to give it up, to occupy one position or another, in either case cheerfully, and *because it is God's appointment for us*, is the thing we should aim at. Bear the discipline now, and hope

for the benefit hereafter. I suppose few little girls like best to be at school, unless it is those who are wise enough to look for the good that they will gain by learning."

"No, grandpapa; but then you see my trial will last all my life, and when are those 'peaceable fruits' to come to me?"

"There are two things to be said about that, Lily. In the first place, it does not follow that the benefits will all be reaped in this life. If your affliction is, by God's grace, made an instrument to wean you from the world, and lead you nearer to God, you will even here begin to reap that harvest, but hereafter you will be able with thankfulness to say, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes.'"

"Yes, grandpapa; I see that. But you said there were two things that might be said; what was the other?"

"Why, the other is—you say that your trial will last all your life. Now this I doubt, at least I doubt whether it will in its full measure. That you will be blind all your life, poor dear, is, I fear, but too true, but I think that the trial and affliction that your blindness is to you will greatly lessen; you will, as time goes on, lose some of the vivid-

ness of your remembrance of external objects, that now leads you so much to long for sight, and, by degrees, acquire first one means and then another, of improving your position, so that, after a very few years, you will, I trust, be feeling the salutary effects of that discipline which was the means of first leading you to the Saviour for comfort, and then of rousing you to find objects of interest, and modes of usefulness, without that faculty on which most people are dependent ; and I think that a very happy future remains in store for my precious little girl."

"I think so too, grandpapa," said Lily, "and I thank you very much for setting me right. But one more thing. Is it wrong to like all the little pleasures that my blindness brings me, and let them partly make up to me for not seeing things? I mean, that I think sometimes when dear papa leads me so carefully along, and stays by my side, when if I could see he would not do so ; and when Maud, and Mabel, and the rest always are so very kind, and Emily reads to me so much, and especially when Evra and Mr. Gambier take me out on the pony ; then I think, 'this is all because I am blind,' and when I have been near liking to be blind, as I have tried so much to do, I believe it

has been just at those pleasant times, and for them, and not because of pleasing God, grandpapa."

"My little girl, you are altogether rather in a puzzle," replied grandpapa. "I have explained your mistake about liking to be blind; and it is not good for you, dear, always to be so much with your inward eyes bent on yourself. Accept all these pleasant things, my child, as from the hand of God, and if you can realize that He sends them to you, and be grateful to Him for them, you are pleasing Him as much when you do so as you are when you are accepting your blindness as from Him, and trying to be contented with it, and under the restrictions it lays on you. You know, dear, you are to accept thankfully the whole of God's will; and these loving attentions of dear friends, and all the kindnesses you receive in consequence of your blindness, are as much parts of His dealings with you as the blindness itself. And you must use them aright, my love, and not make idols of those gratifications, nor allow yourself to hold them too fast—they are of the loving-kindness and tender mercy of your Father; but you must try to be ready to give them up, if called on to do so."

"Yes, grandpapa," said Lilies thoughtfully, and

after a pause added, "but I should not like it, and I hope it will please God not to try me."

"Be thankful for to-day, darling, and trust God for to-morrow. You will never be without the best blessing whilst you have Him to turn to."

"But what do you mean, grandpapa, by saying that it is not good for me to be looking so much into my own mind?" asked Lilies. "I thought it was right that we should examine our own hearts, and see what our motives were, and when we had done right, and when wrong?"

"Certainly, dear, it *is* right," replied Mr. Fraser; "but you know, my love, we may give an undue proportion of our time and thought to what is a duty. Now I have sometimes seen Christians so much occupied in watching the movements of their own hearts, as almost to forget to look up to Christ, or to listen to His consolations, and the teachings of His Spirit. They are so busied in scrutinizing every thought and feeling, that self and not Christ is the object of their attention. Search out your heart, love, with prayer before God, and you will find it full of evil, and that your only hope of peace is to look away from that sinful self, and, saying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' to look upwards. Keep your eye fixed on the glorious Day-star, my

child ; be ever looking unto Jesus and trying to be like Him. What would you think, Lillas, of a very sick person, who should send for the doctor, and all the time of each of his visits be so occupied in thinking over her symptoms, and of how bad this was, and how threatening that, as to be unable to hear the pleasant and encouraging words he said to her ; and then again between his visits, to think and think again about all her ailments, so as to be so much absorbed by them as to forget to take the medicines he had prescribed for her ?”

“ Why, I should think her very silly, grandpapa,” said Lillas.

“ Then now, dear, let me advise you to look more at Christ, and less at your own state of mind and feeling ; for the constant dwelling on the latter will only produce a morbid and unhealthy condition, and hinder you from rejoicing in God, whereas the former will cause light, and life, and peace in your heart, and lead you to glorify Him, whom you will, so doing, perceive to be exceeding glorious, and pure, and holy, beyond what heart can conceive or speech can utter.”

All were silent for a time, after grandpapa had ceased, and then Emily said, “ But please tell us,

Mr. Fraser, did poor Graham give dear little Effie and Lucy solemn burial?"

"Yes, dear, it was a solemn day indeed. All the people from the village and from the mountain hamlets round flocked to the kirkyard, to see the sweet little ones laid in their early graves. The snow had, as I told you, all vanished for a season, except in the heavy drifts, where it lies unthawed all the winter through in that cold climate. The ground was, however, laid bare, but on the morning of the day when the children were to be buried, a thin scattering fell, and clothed all the country with white. It fell, too, into the open grave, where-in the little ones were soon to be laid, and lined it with its delicate flakes, and there, in that pure white tomb, more glorious in its beauty than the Parian marble, were the sweet children interred.

"They were borne to the yard by little girls of their own age, clad in white, and many, many were the tears that fell to the memory of the little blossoms so early transplanted into the heavenly garden."

They had now reached the Grange, and the two children, leaving grandpapa, ran up-stairs to talk over the little snow-perished children and Mr. Fraser's conversation, at their leisure.

XXVII.

TRIALS AHEAD.

HITHERTO no trials had assailed Lillas save her blindness itself and its immediate and necessary results; and these had of late been so much softened to her by the loving watchfulness of her friends, that the pleasure of being the object of such care, at times almost counterbalanced the pain of her position; and if she did not, as she said, *like* to be blind, it certainly very much aided her in bearing her deprivation of sight. Moreover, the trial of blindness was a recognized trial—recognized by herself and all around her as one to submit to which, required much faith and patience on her part, and much indulgence on theirs. It was ever present to her mind that she was to accept that trial and bear it cheerfully for Christ's sake, and by His strength she had been wonderfully enabled to do so. But now, poor child, she began to think, because she had in so great a degree conquered in this affliction, that she was strong, that she "had attained." This is just the state of mind in which

it often pleases our heavenly Teacher so far to alter our position, that trials of a different character than those which have before assailed us or have been anticipated come on us and take us at unawares. So it was to be with our little blind child. New troubles were preparing for her in secret, and it was not long before they burst on her.

Let it not be thought wrong to trust that God will bear us through new troubles that may lie before us, since we have already proved His strength and goodness: "Because Thou hast been my help, therefore under the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice." To trust God for time to come because He has been faithful in times past, is the right and safe position of God's children. Possessed of this confidence, this well-grounded faith, we shall be able to rejoice in present blessings without fear of future sorrows; to bear present sufferings without dread of the extent to which they may amount hereafter; and with filial confidence to say, "Thou hast delivered my soul from death; wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling?" in the full assurance that He *will* deliver them.

But there is a state of mind different from this, when the soul says, "I am strong." Then is it in a dangerous state; and this is the position in which

many a one who has been assailed by a great fight of affliction, and has conquered, is apt to fall. He thinks the fight won, and loosens the armor, and so, when the enemy comes on him, is found unprepared. Such was the state into which our little friend was in danger of falling, had not God whose faithfulness never fails, graciously roused her out of her self-complacency.

Whilst Mr. Fraser and his little companions had been enjoying their walk on the beach, and the elder girls with Everard had been paying a long visit at the Cottage, Mr. Hope had been receiving a visitor. As he sat alone in his study, he saw Mr. Gambier crossing the lawn, and opening the window bade him come in there, for all the rest were out, and as he was confined to the house by a slight cold, he hoped he would come and have a chat with him.

With this invitation Mr. Gambier willingly complied. He had come, he said, with the express view of having some conversation with Mr. Hope, and rejoiced to find him alone and disengaged; and seating himself, he entered at once on the subject on which he wished to speak. Alas! it was a sad one. He had just heard of the serious illness of his widowed father, who was a clergyman holding preferment in a large manufacturing town in the north.

He was an old man, who had been for a long time unable to take much of the duty of the parish, and had been suddenly deprived of the assistance of a coadjutor who had for many years filled the situation of curate in the parish, and almost of a son to his good old rector. This good man was now dead, and Mr. Gambier said that, at his father's advanced age, he could not be satisfied to leave him wholly to the care and society of strangers; and as there was no child but himself to watch over him, he had accepted the offer of an old friend to live in his house and take charge of his own parish—a step to which he had obtained the bishop's sanction—and was himself about to leave his home for an indefinite period, and become his father's curate and companion. He added, that as his friend Mr. Scobell, the gentleman who was to take charge of his present parish, was not young and was in delicate health, it was evident that he must not be burdened with all the duty, but would require the assistance of a curate.

“Now, dear sir, do not you think this would be an excellent opening for Everard? He knows the people, and they him; he has worked with me, and knows all my plans; and as he will be ready to take orders at Easter, I can then give him a title

and a moderate stipend, and he can live with you and his sisters until such time as a suitable house can be found for him to take home his bride."

"Admirable, indeed, my friend," replied Mr. Hope. "We shall not know how to part with you, but I think you are right to go to your father. It seems that you have fully provided for the wants of your parish, and God's blessing will be on you in the execution of your filial duty. But how we shall miss you, Gambier; and poor little Lilies! what will she do without her kind friend and counsellor?"

"Indeed, indeed," said Mr. Gambier, "that parting with my dear little friend will be one of the most painful things in the whole business,—I have felt it such a pleasure to possess so large a portion of the dear child's love and confidence; and to her I know it will be a great trial to be separated from me. But here, as in all His dealings, our heavenly Father has some good in store for us. We cannot doubt it. 'Goodness and mercy *have* followed us,' and will continue to do so. This new trial will help to form the Christian character of dear Lily, and perhaps will tend to show me something of my own heart, for truly I sometimes fear that my love for the dear little one is almost overweening."

“And how soon shall you leave us, my friend?” asked Mr. Hope.

“As soon as I can possibly make my arrangements,” replied Mr. Gambier. “I shall at once go to Ribblefond, and see my dear father, and endeavor to set things in some order, and shall then, God willing, return here for a time, see my arrangements for my people completed, and take leave of you all. We shall no doubt meet from time to time, but whilst my father lives my place of residence must be near him. You will find in Mr. Scobell all you could desire in a pastor. He is a Christian of the highest caste, and also a man of much intelligence and a good scholar; and in his wife, too, I hope you will have a great acquisition, for she is most excellent.”

“Our party will be sadly lessened soon,” said Mr. Hope, “for I have agreed, at her grandfather’s earnest entreaty, that Mabel shall go with him and her cousins to spend some months in the Highlands and be introduced to her dear mother’s family. Maud is so important to her little sister’s well-being, that I could not like to part with her, nor, indeed, would she hear of leaving us. It has not as yet been named to Mabel, but I think she will like the change; and though I do not willingly part with

either of my dear children, I think it is very desirable that one should be yielded to their grandfather's wishes, and so I shall agree to it, if she is willing to go. At first when Mr. Fraser proposed it, it was in the presence of the girls, and I at once said, No ; but he has earnestly pressed it since, and I have, on thinking the matter over, decided that I cannot refuse what he so much desires."

"Everard too will be absent," said Mr. Gambier ; "will he not?"

"He will," replied Mr. Hope. "We have agreed that for the next few weeks he had better give himself up to preparations for his final examination ; so he will go up to Oxford next week, and probably not return until he has received holy orders and is a minister of the Church of England."

"And now, my dear sir," said Mr. Gambier, "I must leave you, but will join your party in the evening, if you will allow me, as to-morrow I set out for the North, and we shall not again meet for some weeks."

Mr. Hope, of course, cordially pressed his friend to give them as much time as he could spare, and then, Mr. Gambier requesting that Mr. Hope would communicate his plans to the rest of the party, the two gentlemen separated.

There was some little surprise felt throughout the family circle when, after dinner was over and the party had gathered round the fire, Mr. Hope drew Mabel into her favorite corner of his chair, and asked her how she would like it if he “changed his mind, and gave consent for her to go with her grandfather and cousins, first to Edinburgh, and then, when spring allowed them to travel, to his home in the Highlands for a few weeks?”

“Why, pater, I do really think I should like it very much,” replied Mabel; “I should not like leaving you, dear, darling pater, nor Maud, nor, indeed, any of you, but I have a sort of longing, too, to go forth on my travels and see things—to see the great people in Edinburgh, and the great mountains in the Highlands, and all the other great and little things in the world—and I do think I should like to go—very much indeed, papa!”

“But do you really think of allowing her to go, dear uncle?” exclaimed Robina. “Oh, do let her, and then she can be *Helen’s* bridesmaid with me.”

So many voices were now joined in the entreaty, including Mabel’s own, that Mr. Hope was fain to admit that he had decided to let her go. Their journey northward was to begin in about three weeks, and Mabel, half sorrowing over the idea of

parting with her father and sisters for the first time in her life, and half rejoicing in that of seeing new scenes and new people—a prospect in which the young generally much delight—set about making her preparations for the journey.

Poor little Lilius was sorely troubled at the thought of losing “dear merry May,” as she called her, and just when dear grandpapa, and Robi, and Helen, were going away too. It would be “so dull,” she said. Little did Lily know all that was in store for her. She comforted herself by thinking, that there would still be a great many things left that were very pleasant, and amongst the brightest of these, shone the thoughts of Mr. Gambier and the pony, and of her own darling Emily, with whom she became day by day more closely intimate.

But her dismay, when she heard that Mr. Gambier was also going away, was extreme. She wept and bewailed herself until reminded that her friend was coming in the evening, and would be vexed to see her giving way so much. Then she endeavored to cheer up, but her countenance was not sufficiently under her command to enable her to look cheerful, and poor Mr. Gambier was greeted, when he arrived, with something very like

reproaches and with a very cloudy face. Mr. Hope had not told the little girl anything more than that Mr. Gambier was going away for a short time, as he justly thought it as well to break the matter to her by degrees; and as he was coming back again for some weeks before his final departure, her father thought that a future time would be soon enough to impart to her the heavier tidings that awaited her.

Sitting close by the side of her friend, Lily, however, determined to make the most she could of her present pleasure, and a few whispered words from him, which contained a little of reproof and a good deal of comfort and encouragement, helped to make her again cheerful and able to enjoy the pleasant evening with all its varied amusements.

As Mr. Gambier was not to leave home early, he promised to breakfast with them next day, and then Mr. Hope and Lily were to go with him to the station, where he took the train, so that with that pleasure in view, the friends parted for the night with very tolerable equanimity.

The next morning was bright but cold. Mr. Gambier came as he had appointed, and the breakfast passed off very pleasantly. An hour after it was over, the carriage was announced, as he wished

to stop at Cliff cottage, and say farewell to Mrs. Evelyn and the Dormers, and was also to go to his own home and take up his portmanteau. The drive was very pleasant, and the conversation lively, and when they got to the cottage, Emily was picked up, and taken with them to the station, with permission to return and spend the day with Lilius; so that this day, that Lily had expected to be dreadfully sad and dull, bade fair to be a very pleasant one. The parting with Mr. Gambier once over, Mr. Hope proposed driving the two little girls through the town, and home by another way, and altogether Lily's spirits soon rose, and she and Emily became full of fun and glee.

Although they were such fast friends, there were great differences both in the persons and the characters of these little girls. Emily was a stout, square-built child, sensible, and very pleasing in countenance, with straight, darkish-brown hair, and a peculiar simplicity of diction and manners. Lily, on the contrary, was tall, thin, and pale, with an intellectual countenance (the expression of which was, however, somewhat dimmed by the absence of light in the eyes), long massive curls of auburn hair, and a rather romantic and poetical turn of thought, which often showed itself in her language.

Emily was a fine example of common sense. Lily was but too apt to depart from the rules that that rare quality might dictate. Emily seldom said a word on any subject until she had thought a little about it, and felt pretty sure she was right ; whilst Lily was apt to break out into vehement expressions of praise and admiration, or of blame and dislike, on the impulse of the moment, and before she had well considered whether such expressions were due or not. They formed excellent friends, Lily being like a graceful, light little barge on the waters, whilst Emily, acting as ballast, had a power over her eager and clever little ally, which those possessed of steady sense not unfrequently gain over their more brilliant companions. But though thus differing, their love for each other was unbounded, and Emily's admiration of Lilies was only equalled by Lily's respect for Emily.

XXVIII.

AMBITION CORRECTED.

“**I** SHOULD like to do some great thing, Emily,” said Lily, one day, “something worth doing. There is no reason that because I am blind I might not distinguish myself, you know. A great many blind people have done wonderful things. There was Milton—who ever wrote such poetry? and he was quite blind, you know, Emma. And then there was Huber—what a naturalist he was! and he could not see a bit, and all he learned about the bees was by means of his servant’s eyes instead of his own.”

“Yes,” replied Emily; “and then, again, there was that blind traveller, Mr. —, something with an H—I forget his name, but he went all over Europe, and to Egypt, and I don’t know where, and wrote a book. I think if you do anything great, and excel in anything, Lily, it must be in music, for that is your especial talent.”

“So it is,” answered Lilius; “and I do think I will give up other things, and try whether I cannot

become such a musician as that people may come from all parts to hear 'The Blind Musician,' and put it in the papers, and foreigners, perhaps, describe how wonderfully I play on the different instruments, and sing. Would it not be nice, Emmy, to hear all the people talking about the 'Little Blind Musician?' " And Liliás, flushed with delight at her expected triumphs, became, as she always did on such occasions, quite vehement and excited.

"But you know, Lily, you will not be a little girl by the time you have done all that," replied Emily; "you will be quite grown up. And I am not sure, but I do not think you would quite like to sing and play to every one, just that they might admire and talk about you?"

"No; that is true," answered Lily, a little daunted. "It would take years to be a wonder in music, and when I had done I should not at all like to be made a show of: that will not do; but what *can* I do, Emily? I should like to be first-rate at something. I know if I had eyes I would learn, and learn, until I was as clever as possible; but now I can do nothing worth doing," added she, in somewhat of a repining tone.

"Can my Lily really do nothing worth doing?" said Everard, entering the room at the moment.

"Why, I thought my little sister had quite settled what she was going to do, and not only so, but had made some progress in her chosen path. What is all this about, Mufti?" (a pet name of Evra's own special invention). "What do you want to do, dear?" said he, seating himself on an easy chair, and Lily on his knee.

Lily, who was half ashamed of her aspirations, was not quite willing to tell what had been the subject of her conversation with Emily. She, however, could not escape; so, with a few blushes, she confided to Evra her earnest desire for distinction, adding, "Can you tell me anything that I might learn to do very well, Evra? You know it is right to use the talents that God has given us, and papa says that if God has seen fit to take away *one* power, we should try to do the more with those powers that remain."

"Very true, Muf," replied her brother; "but tell me, little one, why you are so anxious to excel in some one thing?"

"Oh, it would be pleasant to be famous, Evra," replied Lily.

"Oh ho! you are ambitious, Missy! that is it," said Evra, laughing.

"I will tell you something you may do, dearest,"

continued he, gravely and tenderly, after a short pause; "I have read of a little child who has been spoken of and set forth as an example for centuries past. I do not know the name of the child, nor its age; I do not even know whether it was a boy or girl; but it has become very famous, and I should like *you* to be like it. Who can tell me who or what that child was?" added he, turning first to Emily and then to Lily with an inquiring look.

"I'm sure I cannot think, Evra," said Lily; "you don't know whether it was a boy or girl, or how old it was, or anything about it, and yet you say that it has been famous for centuries. I know now," added she, after a short time of consideration; "it was that Spartan child who let the fox he had stolen bite and eat him, and would not make a sound; was it, Ev?"

"That was a boy, Lily," said Emily, "and your brother says he does not know whether the one he speaks of was a boy or a girl. No, *I* think Mr. Everard means something different from *that*," continued she blushing, with the timid feeling that perhaps she was wrong.

"What do you think, Emmy? don't be afraid, dear; speak out, and if you are wrong, I will tell you," replied Everard.

“Well, then,” replied Emily, “I fancied, but perhaps it was not right, that you meant that little child that Jesus took, and set him in the midst, and told those who wanted to be great, to be like that child.”

“And you were right, my dear. I did mean that child, and I should like you both to be such as it was. Be foremost in humility, in obedience, in zeal for God’s glory, above all, in *love*, and you will have such distinction as neither man nor angel can take from you, the distinction of God’s approval.”

“Yes, dear Evra,” said Lily; “that would be best, and I should be glad enough to have that best honor. But I might have that, and yet excel in some point of learning, or some accomplishment, too; might I not? You know what I mean. I should like so much to be able to do something clever, something that you might all be proud of me, and that people would praise and admire me for; you know it would not be right for them to praise and admire me for humility, or goodness, and I should not like it either—I mean not to be noticed and talked about for such things, because the glory and credit of it all ought to be given to God, and not to me!”

"True, dear," answered Everard; "but tell me, if God gives to any one great abilities, or wonderful musical powers, or anything else beyond what is common, is not that person called on to give the honor and glory of them to Him? have you a right to cultivate and use those gifts for the purpose of making your family proud of you, and of being admired, and sought after, and praised for them? Surely, my little sister, the praise belongs to Him who *gave* the powers, and not to him who possesses them? And do not you think also, that the eager seeking for distinction, which seems at present to possess you, is not unlikely to hinder you from attaining to that better greatness of which we have been speaking?"

"Yes, Evra," said Lily, after a little thought. "I suppose it might be more likely to make me proud than humble, if I were to become so much noticed and praised. And so then, perhaps, I had better not try to get on so fast with things."

"My dear child, get on as fast as ever you can; make the very best of the abilities and powers that God has given you. Try to excel to the utmost, in anything you like, so that you do not devote time to one thing that ought to be given to another; only do not do it that you may obtain praise of

men, or become exalted in their sight, but do it 'to the glory of God.' Make the best of every talent, and present the proceeds to God, saying, 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do.'"

"Well, Everard," replied Lilius, throwing her arms round his neck, and giving him a loving kiss, "I believe you are right, and I will try to grow better, and more humble, and go on learning to agree with God, and be contented to be just what He pleases, and use His gifts to His glory, and not to my own."

"And now, that this long talk is ended," said Everard, "who will like to go with me, and see the sliding on the common? The pond is all covered with thick ice, and I shall take my skates, and will give you each a slide in a chair on runners."

"Oh, what fun!" shouted the little girls; "do wait for us, we will not be a minute dressing," and off they started, and soon returned, equipped for a winter's walk; and before many minutes had elapsed, Everard, with his two little companions, together with Helen and Robina Fraser, Maud and Mabel, were before the windows of the Dormers' cottage, summoning the other girls to come out, and join them in their excursion, and then all the party proceeded together to the scene of action.

It was a brilliant morning. The sun shone bright and clear, and the objects which it lit up were most lovely. Some hours of drizzling rain and fog, falling through a very still atmosphere, had been succeeded by a sharp and sudden frost, which had prevailed for twenty-four hours with unbroken force. The result of this was, that every stem and branch, and even the most minute things on every tree and shrub, were coated with ice and tipped with glittering icicles, and that the grass and herbage were completely crusted over with a covering of pure white hoar-frost, the particles of frozen water ramifying in every direction, and each glittering with diamond-like lustre as it caught the sunlight on its polished surface. The brook was ice-bound, but at a lower level than that at which it had flowed the day before the frost interrupted its progress, and in consequence the roots of trees and shrubs which grew on the banks were uncovered, and stood out now all one mass of frostwork on both sides the brook—

“With forms so various that no powers of art,
The pencil or the pen, can trace the scene!
Here glittering turrets rise upheaving high
(Fantastic misarrangement); on the roof
Large growth of what may seem the sparkling trees
And shrubs of Fairy-land. The crystal drops,
That trickle down the branches, fast congeal’d,
Shoot into pillars of pellucid length,
And prop the pile they but adorned before.”

There, too, rose groups of the beautiful male fern, like icy crowns; and tufts of the lovely hart's-tongue—the brilliant green of its fronds but half concealed by the white frosting which partially coated them—hung heavy with their newly acquired clothing, quite to the surface of the spell-bound stream, looking like a crystal fairy forest, so white and glittering and delicate.

All these fair visions were unseen by poor Lily, but she could hear the sweet voices which filled the air, the crisp sounds of the ice as it crackled beneath their feet, and the song of the robin, as,

“Content

With slender notes, and more than half suppress'd,
Pleased with his solitude, and flitting light
From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes
From many a twig the pendent drops of ice,
That tinkle in the withered leaves below.”

All this Lilius could hear and enjoy; and also the merry voices of boys and girls, who, released from school by the Christmas holidays, were hastening to share the fun and pleasure which the frozen pond was sure to afford them. It was a gay and pretty scene that awaited our party when they arrived there. A fine broad piece of water, now converted into ice, so solid as to be quite safe ground for the

many sliders and skaters who already occupied it, lay before them, surrounded by an open common, now well peopled with human beings, of all classes and ages, from Coombhurst and the neighboring villages, all in high spirits and prepared for enjoyment. There were children in their gay plaids and winter coats of many colors, ladies in their scarlet and blue and other gay-tinted cloaks and shawls, and roughly-clad men and boys, together with little ones from the village schools—some shouting and running, others walking in merry groups chatting together, but all in holiday spirits and glee.

A couple of hours were soon passed in the pleasant amusements of sliding and skating, and the little girls exceedingly enjoyed the new amusement of being pushed about in chairs on the ice by their brothers; for Vernon and Edward, who were, of course, there, were both able to skate, and Vernon was allowed to share in pushing them, although Edward was not considered quite strong enough to manage more than his own movements.

It was a day of great excitement and delight to the little girls, and they went home in full anticipation of another sliding-party on the next day.

Little was talked of in the evening but the exploits of the skaters and the fun of the sort of

sleigh travelling that the chairs had afforded ; and many of the customs of different countries connected with sleighing, and ice and snow travelling, were referred to, and passages from different authors were read, and places looked out on the map ; so that quite a new impulse seemed to have been communicated to the whole party, and all separated for the night in eager anticipation of the next day's pleasures.

But snow and ice are rare visitors at Torquay and in its neighborhood, and when they *do* come it seems that they find something that does not suit them in that district, for rarely do they extend the pleasures which their unfrequent visits afford for a longer period than a day or two. It was so in this instance. A thaw occurred in the night, accompanied by soft rain, and before morning the brook ran freely on its course, the ducks found their usual passage through the waters of the pond, unimpeded by ice ; and the fairy columns and capitals which had sprung up so suddenly amongst the water-courses, and suspended themselves from the eaves of the houses, had all melted away.

“ And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Left not a rack behind.”

XXIX.

ILL TEMPER OVERCOME.

ALAS! that we should have to recount so sorrowful a fact; with the melting of the ice so melted Lily's temper. She woke the next morning with her mind full of anticipated pleasure; and when nurse came to call her little one, Lily began to dilate on the expected enjoyment that lay before her, when, to her infinite dismay, she learned that all hope of the kind must be laid aside, for that although it did not then rain, yet the frost was all quite gone, and sliding was an impossibility.

Much annoyed and out of humor, she descended to the breakfast-room; but she had sufficient command over herself not to allow anything that might indicate the state of her mind to appear. The meal over, she proceeded to the study, and after the usual family Scripture-reading was over, she was left alone with directions to employ herself in preparing some French sentences in her mind, in readiness to repeat them to her sister when she should be ready to hear her—an employment which

always formed a part of her morning lessons—when the door opened, and, instead of Maud, Emily and Blanche Dormer bounded into the room, wild with glee; and throwing her arms round Lily, and giving her a violent embrace and kiss, Emily exclaimed, “Joy, Lily, joy! wish us joy, for we are going to have *such* a treat. Guess, Lily; what is it?”

“I’m sure I have not an idea, Em,” replied Lilius. “What can it be? what are we going to do?”

“Oh, not you—only Blanche and I. I wish it were you too, dear Lily; that is the only drawback to our pleasure, or nearly the only one. My aunt has decided to let us go to Scotland, to stay with Aunt Montrose, and Janet, and our other cousins that we so much wish to see. We are to go under Mr. Fraser’s care, and travel with Mabel and Robina and Helen, and to stay there three or four months. Aunt Stirling wanted Rosalie too; but Aunt Evelyn said she could not spare her, for that she must go on with her studies, but that we little ones might go. Won’t it be nice, Lil?”

“Oh, very, I dare say,” replied Lily, whose face, whilst Emily was speaking, had assumed its old proud, impassive expression.

"I wish you were going too, dearest Lily," said poor Emily, who felt that in her first eagerness she had too much lost sight of Liliass's feelings and of her own real sorrow at being separated from her friend. "I wish it so much, but you know that cannot be; but I shall be so sorry to leave you, poor, dear darling;" and the affectionate child put her arm round the waist of her little friend, and was going to kiss her, when Liliass coldly withdrew from her, and replied in a disagreeable, rude tone—

"Yes, no doubt; it looks like it."

"But indeed I am, Lily—we both are, are we not, Blanche? but, you know, of course we like all the pleasure of such a long journey, and to see the new places, and all our dear cousins and relations, and to be visiting so much," said Emily, with tears in her eyes. "Now, don't be vexed, Liliass. You know I love no one so well as I do you; and I shall write to you very often, and when we come back we shall be so happy together again."

"Everybody will go away, I suppose, and leave me to do as well as I can by myself," said Liliass, angrily. "I should not have been so glad to go away from *you*, Emily; but people are different from each other, and novelty pleases *some* better than anything."

Emily began to cry, and Lillas to think. A silence of a few moments ensued, and then Blanche said, "Don't mind her, Emmy—she's a cross, naughty girl to speak so to you. You are a better girl than she is, and she does not deserve to be your friend. Don't cry, dear—never mind her."

"But I *do* mind, Blanche," said Emily, sobbing—"I *do* mind. I love Lily better than all the novelty in the world, and I thought she knew that I did."

"And I *do* know it, dear," said Lillas, "and I ought not to have spoken so. I am very sorry, Emily, and it was very naughty to say such things. Blanche is quite right; I do not deserve to have you for my friend. Do forgive me. I was vexed and cross at seeing that you seemed to like to go; but I am sorry that I said what I did."

Emily was not the sort of child to resist poor Lily's penitent entreaties even for a moment, and the two little girls cemented their union by an affectionate embrace; and then they sat down together to talk over the projected plan on the most amicable terms possible.

But though Lillas was thus sorry for her failure of temper, and acknowledged it in a manner quite different from what she would have done in former

years, she was far from being in a right state of feeling about the prospect of losing Emily. It never once occurred to her that this minor trial was a part of God's dealings with her—that the deprivation of Emily's society was a thing to be accepted as from God, quite as much as her blindness or any heavier trial; and so, although no longer cross to Emily, she allowed herself to repeat over and over again how provoking it was that she should be going—that it would be so dull, and she should be so wretched, and many other foolish and rebellious speeches, which only served to place her more and more at a distance from that quiet and submissive spirit which she had been so carefully cultivating, and of which she had latterly attained so much.

XXX.

SEPARATION.

BUT although Liliás' good resolution often failed in the performance, and her better nature slumbered and slept, she was no longer "dead in trespasses and sins." As surely as she yielded to her impetuous and proud temper, and gave way to repining and discontent, so surely did a time of regret and repentance invariably follow; and, as will ever be the case with those who are truly and abidingly under the influence of the sanctifying Spirit of God, such seasons of failure and regret were followed by times of more faithfulness; and from each fall, she rose to fresh and stronger efforts to run with patience the race that was set before her; and thus, though we are obliged to confess that our little friend was still far from what she should be, yet all who witnessed her daily walk and conversation could see that a steady progress in good things marked her onward course.

It was so in the present instance. Night came, and Liliás sat down by her bedside, to think over

the events of the day, before she knelt to seek God's pardon for the sins into which, during its course, she had fallen, and to pray for strength and grace to do better. She now remembered her conduct to Emily in the morning with contrition, and also her many repining thoughts and words, and became conscious how little her behavior had been in accordance with her professed desire to accept the whole will of God—to let Him direct her path, and proportion her pains and pleasures—how little it had been likely to improve her young companions, and lead them to honor God.

With these thoughts in her mind, Lily knelt and prayed earnestly, and with perhaps more humility than of late, for she felt her weakness, and longed for better strength; and having done so, she lay down to rest, resolved that in the morning she would tell both Emily and Blanche how sorry she was, and how conscious of having done wrong, and with a settled determination to be more watchful for the future.

“Of course,” thought she, “some of the things that are to happen to me will be painful and disagreeable, and sometimes it will be in one way and sometimes in another that I shall be tried. It is of no use to say that I like God to do all the things in His own way, and to let me have ‘fellowship’ with

Him, and work with Him, and then to grumble and fret if the way He fixes on is one I dislike! I must take it *all*—little trials and great ones, pleasant and disagreeable—and be as cheerful as the angels would be. They would not grumble. They are ministering spirits sent to do His will, and they do exactly what God bids them, and are always praising Him, and so must I.” And so, meditating on the angels and their employments, her thoughts ran on to considering what were the occupations and delights of the saints in heaven, until she slept a happy peaceful sleep, full of sweet dreams and thoughts of the holy and heavenly places, with their myriads of rejoicing inhabitants; and fancied herself there before the throne, her closed-up eyes opened to behold “Him who sitteth thereon,” her voice joined with the angelic choir and their heaven-tuned harps, and Emily, and Blanche, and the sweet little singers at Abbotsleigh, all gathered round.

And so she slept until the morning sounds wakened her to life and action, and she sprang from her bed full of happy thoughts, feeling quite willing to part with Mabel, and with Emily, and with any others, if God called them.

In this peaceful frame of mind, Liliás made her appearance at the breakfast-table, and throughout

the day all were struck by her sweet and pleasant manner.

The proposed admissions of her having been in fault were frankly made to Emily and Blanche, who came early to spend the day ; and instead of complaining as she had done the day before, she entered affectionately and cheerfully into their anticipations of pleasure, asked a hundred questions about the family they were going to visit, and the way they were to go, and begged them to write as often as they could. " But not to worry yourself, Emmy." added she, " because when you are from home, perhaps you will not have much time, and though I shall long for your letters, and get papa or Maud to write for me very often, I shall never think, dear, that it is because you do not love me, or wish to write, if your letters are long in coming, for I know you do love me ! and you will talk to Janet about me, won't you ? If she should come back with you, what friends we shall all be, and how nice it will be ? "

The little girls had an immense deal to settle together, on such important matters as children usually consult much over—what dolls Blanche should take, and what clothing the said dolls would require ; whether the blue-eyed Alice, or the brown-

haired Helen should go, and whether the baby should go or stay. Then Emily wished to take some of Liliás's books for her cousins to read, and Lily begged to be allowed to have Fata to stay with her during their absence.

But there were more important points than these to discuss, for all the children had an interest amongst the poor and in the village school, and Emily had been intrusted with a class; and now she thought that Liliás, notwithstanding her blindness, might go on teaching the children until her own return, so that her pupils might be kept together. This Liliás thought very possible, as she knew a great part of the Psalms and Gospels by heart, and so could hear the little ones read, and correct them when wrong, and could, of course, give them a little simple instruction, such as the very young children of whom Emily had charge required; and as to their hymns, or any lessons that she did not know, she could "get Maud or Meta just to hear that." This idea was most delightful to Liliás, and she began to feel that there were yet pleasures in store for her, and to recognize the truth, that when God takes one thing away he usually gives another in compensation; and that the spirit to accept the new gift,

instead of that of repining for the old, is one of the best springs of happiness that we can have.

February opened with clear bright weather. There lay a little snow on the ground, just a mere sprinkling, through which the green grass peeped up to the light, and over which the delicate snow-drops hung their pure white blossoms in abundant clusters, rivalling the snow itself in whiteness. The catkins, pendent on the hazel, scattered their golden powder on the air, as the soft breeze shook them, and the little lambs, now numerous in the pastures, ran bleating about in merry groups, rejoicing in the clear sunshine. Such was the scene without; within it was less cheerful. The beloved grandfather, whose vigorous intellect had animated, whilst his loving spirit had cheered and won every member of the household at the Grange, was gone; Mabel, the merry, guileless, blithe Mabel, was gone; Robina and Helen, with their fine pure Scotch accent, and their bonny faces and lively spirits, were gone; and, worst of all to Lilies, her own dear Emily and Blanche were gone—Emily, the faithful and trusty friend, the wise little counsellor, the sweet-tempered, unselfish Emily, was gone for months; and the little blind Lilies could no longer have the guidance of that dear little hand, which for

such a long time past, had always been ready to lead her through her noonday darkness; nor the help of that kind soft voice to read to her, and to tell her all those watchful observing eyes noted, as they walked or played together! Only the day before had the whole party started for their northern journey, and those whom they had left behind were now in their first stage of that heaviness of spirit which oppresses those who have parted with dearest friends, yet have not the excitement of travelling and change to distract their attention.

Lilias was sad, but she had now advanced so far in her spiritual course, that though perhaps she talked less of her desire to consent to the will of God in all things, and yield herself up to Him to do all in His own way, yet she was not less desirous to be enabled to do so; and the present trial found her in an humble and submissive state of mind. She had known that the trouble was approaching; at the first intimation of it she had, as we have seen, given way to temper, and shown an insubordinate spirit; but happily she had soon detected this, and had steadily set herself to conquer *self*, and submit cheerfully to the deprivations which must necessarily follow on the loss of so many beloved friends; and, therefore, although it was a great

struggle to the little girl, and she was in heart sad, she rose to meet the emergency with cheerfulness, and addressed herself with alacrity to doing all that lay in her power to brighten the spirits of her father and Maud.

"Papa," said she, as soon as the breakfast things were cleared, "you know it won't do for us to sit down and be dull. Won't you and Maud take me for a walk? It is sweet sunshine; I can feel that. I'll tell you what I should like, papa, shall I?"

"Do, my pet," replied her father; "I feel as if I should like to sit down, and moan over the loss of all our dear ones! but, as you say, Muf, that will not do. Come, what shall we do? tell us your plan, Lil, and then Maud shall say what she thinks of it."

"Well then, papa; I think we might set out directly, go all round by the brook, and I suspect we shall find snowdrops—bulbous violets, old Gerarde calls them, though I never can tell why, for they are not a bit like violets. Well, there we shall find them, and you can show me where, and I can pick them myself; and then we will go to Abbotsleigh, and call on old Mrs. Sutor, and take her the snowdrops, because I promised I would take her the first I picked; and then we can go to Mr. Gambier's

lodgings, and ask when he is coming back. That will be a comfort, father dear, when we get him back, won't it?"

"I shall rejoice to see him, my love," replied her father; "there are few such as he is." He spoke with a sigh, which Lily—whose ear now so much supplied the place of sight—instantly noticed. She had not, as we have already said, been told of Mr. Gambier's proposed departure, nor, indeed, had any except Everard, whom it so nearly concerned; so that she was naturally building her hopes of a happy and pleasant summer with his frequent companionship, and many a delightful walk and ride of old.

"Why do you sigh, papa?" asked she; "you have not heard anything about him, have you? he is not ill?"

"No, my love," answered Mr. Hope; "not that I have heard of. We will follow your plan, my child, if Maud likes."

Maud gave a willing assent, and the little party prepared for their walk.

XXXI.

MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL VISION.

“**A**ND now, papa,” asked Lily, as they walked across the meadows towards the brook, “do not you think I might begin to have the little twins, as you promised me, at Christmas? I will do as you bid me, and take great care not to say too much of praise, and make them vain. I should like to teach them only sacred music, and let them learn psalms and hymns, the words I mean, and say them to me, and then I can explain their meaning a little, because you know, of course, as I am older, and have been better taught than they have, I know more than they do; and so, if by first repeating the words, and talking and thinking over the meaning and the doctrine they teach, we can get to feel them, and think about God whilst we are singing, I think we shall not be so much taken up with ourselves. Don’t you think so, Maud?”

“Yes, darling,” replied Maud, “I think your plan is a very good one. But I should like to help

you; would it lessen your pleasure, or make you feel shy and uncomfortable if I were to be present, when I can spare time? I think, perhaps, I should be of some help to you all."

"Oh, thank you, Maud," said Lily, kissing her sister's hand, as was her wont to do when much pleased. "*You* make me feel uncomfortable, or lessen my pleasure! I should think not, indeed; and now, papa, with Mandie to help, I am sure you will not be afraid to trust me, and we might call to-day, and ask Mrs. Burton about letting them come."

"Then I will tell you how it shall be, my child," said Mr. Hope. "I confess Maud's offer makes me better pleased with the plan, for you are so thoughtless, and so likely to overpraise the poor little things (whose singing certainly is wonderful), that I was half afraid that more harm than good would be done. As there is no school on Saturdays, we will ask their mother to spare them for the whole day, and let them come at twelve o'clock, have their dinner with the servants, and their lesson afterwards, and get home before dusk; we will try it once first, before we promise anything, but if they really prove to be nice, well-behaved children, and you like it, I will allow them to do so

every week through the summer. You have no objection, dear?" asked he of Maud.

"Not the least, dear father," replied Maud. "I think in many ways it will be good both for Lily and the little ones, and I shall gladly share in their teaching."

"Oh, how very kind, dearest of kind papas, and best of all kind sisters," said Lily, jumping about, and making such demonstrations of glee, as made her father and sister laugh at her. Presently she began to bleat like the lambs, and invited Maud to a run after them, and then returning to her father, who was watching her with affectionate pity, she said, "Do you remember that night when you read about the sheep, papa, till I cried?"

"Perfectly, my love," replied Mr. Hope.

"I never thought then, papa, that I should have been able to like to hear their pretty bleating, and to run and enjoy the feeling of the air, and sunshine, and the sounds of things that I could not see. I thought I should never care for anything again then, and now it is all so pleasant and so bright!"

" 'None are so deaf as those who won't hear,' is an old saying, darling, and we may also say with truth, 'None are so blind as those who won't

see.' You were, at the time of which you speak, discontented and rebellious, resolved that as God had taken away the power of sight from your outward eyes, you would closely shut up your inward and mental vision—that the eyes of your mind should see nothing that was lovely or bright, and all should remain as dead in the spirit as it was in the eyes. It was a sad time, dear, to you and to us all. Those who 'refuse to be comforted,' and resolutely cherish misery, as you did, are little aware of the grief such a course produces in the hearts of those whom they best love, as well as of the exceeding provocation it is to God, thus to rebel when His fatherly chastisement visits us."

"You were all very kind, dearest papa," said Liliás. "I am sure I must have tried you all very much; but I did not feel that I was doing so at the time."

"Self, my child, was uppermost; that is at the root of all inconsolable grief. I thank God, my Liliás, that you have learned to fight against this tyrant, self. I always feel sure, when I see any one yielding to the unchecked influence of grief, however weighty may be the cause, that other chastisements will follow, if the mourner be a child of God. It is self showing its pre-eminence in the

heart, by making its own sorrows the sole object of its contemplation, to the exclusion of the sufferings which that self-concentration may inflict on others. Those who do so, seem to forget that friends around in many cases suffer as severely as themselves, from the same stroke that is bowing them to the earth, and they do not scruple to add to that which has broken down their own mind, the additional weight of their own manifest depression."

" 'God loveth a cheerful giver,' and this applies equally, whether the offering we make to Him is in the form of money, of worldly goods, or of any of those dearer things which we may be called on to give up, as health or friends. Does it not, papa?" asked Maud.

"I think so, my dear," replied Mr. Hope; "or any of the precious faculties, with which God has graciously endowed us; as you, my Lilies, of your sight."

"I am sorry, papa, very sorry," said Lilies. "I have often thought about how wrong I was; but, papa, 'then I was blind—now I see!'" said Lilies, the last words after a long pause, and with much solemn feeling; and added again, after a moment, "I see, but not very clearly yet, papa; it is just as

if a little corner of one of my eyes were opened, and I could see one little spot, and in that little spot was your dear kind hand, held out for me to take hold of. I can just see God's hand, and one little step before me sometimes, and sometimes something slips in between me and my little spot of light, and shuts out the sight of His hand and the right way, and then I wander from it."

" 'Mine eyes are ever unto the Lord,' says David; and then we are told to 'run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus.' If you see *Him*, you see enough dear. But here we are at the brook."

"And there are the snowdrops," exclaimed Maud; "run Lily," said she, taking her by the hand, and setting off at full speed towards some very fine roots, that sprung up among the low bushes that fringed the brook.

"Oh, I feel them," said Lillas, grasping her little hand full of the fine long stems, with the leaves all together. "What beauties, and how sweet they are!" and in a few minutes, all three were as busy gathering the lovely spring flowers, as if they were all children together.

When they had collected a sufficient quantity,

they all proceeded with renewed spirits towards the village, chatting pleasantly as they went, of the beloved travellers, and of home plans, amongst which the one of the little Burtons' visit was not forgotten.

XXXII.

MR. GAMBIER'S RETURN.

THEIR first call at Coombhurst was at a farm called Abbotsleigh, on their friend Mrs. Sutor, a nice white-haired old lady, the widow of a respectable farmer. She was aged and confined to her chair by rheumatic gout, but she was one of the most cheerful of beings, and always delighted in having flowers, and children, and birds, and kittens, and anything else that spoke of life and happiness, around her. Lily was a prime favorite with her, and the "little one," as Mrs. Sutor called her, found great delight in being always the first to take the young flowers of each season to her old friend. It was a sort of understood thing that Lilius was to bring the flowers, and, at the same time, to partake of a glass of the old lady's cowslip wine; and it not unfrequently happened, that a piece of nice home-baked cake was ready to be produced, though sometimes some brown bread and butter, or bread and cream, supplied its place. On this occasion the whole party were regaled with the most excellent

bread and cream, and as the good lady was "well to do" in the world, and was always quite vexed if her hospitality was declined, Mr. Hope made no scruple of partaking of the pleasant food for which their walk had given them a special inclination, and her kindness was cordially recognized by presents of fruit, game, or any other little delicacy that the garden or larder of the Grange afforded.

Lily was in high glee, chatting and laughing with her kind old friend, frolicking with the kitten, and feeding the bird, with pleasant unrestrained freedom. She told Mrs. Sutor of their plan about the little Burtons, confiding to her, that if they were good and nice children, they were to come every Saturday, and expatiating largely on the quality of their voices, and the correctness of their ear.

"Better than that, dear, we may say of 'em, if all tales is true," said Mrs. Sutor, in her fine full Devonshire, in which all the personal pronouns that belong to a sentence are apt to take the wrong places. "They 'm *geud* little maids, and so 'bedient and dutiful to their mother as ever was. One or t' other on 'em do come up to me every morning for a drap a skaal milk, that us do gi'e 'em, and they be all ways so clean and so tidy, as if they was lady's children, wi' a nuss to look ater 'em. Purty little

blids they be too, and so handy! Lawks, Miss Lily, if you was to see 'em of a morning! There, peur little dear! do 'ee forgive me, I never gied a thought about your peur dear eyes! and that ever I should be so stoopid!"

"Never mind, Mrs. Sutor," said Lily, cheerfully; "you know I'm used to be blind now, and I do not mind people's forgetting; do go on." But Mrs. Sutor was not destined to go on, for at this moment the door opened softly, and a head was thrust in at it, the sight of which produced such a commotion, that the little Burtons and all other things were forgotten, and thought of no more. It was Mr. Gambier! He had returned the night before, and, setting himself at once to his usual work, one of his first calls was at Mrs. Sutor's. Little did he think of the pleasant party he should find there, but not the less was he rejoiced to sit down and share the farm-house fare that stood before him with those dear friends, and not less pleased was the good widow to have him as her guest.

"There! now I've a got all they as I do most vallee and love, a saut down at my table," said she, "and I do bless the Lord that sent 'em; but lanks, Mr. Gambier," added she reproachfully, "you bayn't half the man you was! why, you be dwined away so,

you bayn't no more than a spinnel-straw ! You do want a *Missis*, sir ! that's what *you* do want ! somebody as 'll see that you do get some victuals and look ater ye a bit ! Then, 'fore you did goo away, ye did waak and waak all the day right out, and ye don't look as tho'f ye had rested yourself much, nor had much victuals neither, since ye went away ! Ye do want a good careful Missus to look ater ye, Mr. Gambier, and I do wish to my heart ye'd a got one."

Poor Mr. Gambier did indeed look pale and thin, for he had encountered a good deal of a trying nature in his northern journey, and also looked forward with great sorrow to the parting with dear friends and valued parishioners that lay before him. Mr. Hope now rose and said that they must go, and begged their friend to return with them, and cheer their little circle, which, he added, was sadly down-cast by the departure of so many dear ones. To this he agreed, and Lilies, overjoyed, once more found herself walking by the side of her dearly loved friend, holding his hand, and listening to his words, which to-day, though of a rather more serious cast than usual, were full of cheerful and thankful expressions, and calculated to brighten the spirits of the whole party. He was always one who could forget his own troubles, or put them

aside, when the claims of others required him to do so ; and now he gave out freely the best treasures of his cultivated mind and sanctified spirit, and in "watering others," was, as is often the case, "himself watered," for his free and open communications drew out the secret stores of his companions' minds, and acted as a key whereby to unlock the sources of their deeper and usually more hidden feelings. And thus in happy interchange of thought passed the time of their walk.

Lilias was silent. It was enough joy for her to hold the hand of her friend, and to drink in the words of love and wisdom which flowed from the lips of those so dear to her ; and with her little heart stirred up from its lowest depths, and its best sources of happiness all throwing up their fullest streams, the little girl walked silently. Yet never did she forget that day and its sweet converse.

"We shall miss dear Helen's sweet Scotch songs, Maud," said Mr. Hope, after dinner, as the day began to close in : "I did so enjoy her singing of those true old melodies, and it just suited—a sort of music for the gloaming. But come, girls, if we cannot have her Scotch songs, you can give us something else. Sing, dear children."

"Lily will sing you a song, papa," said Maud,

laughing, and urging Lilies towards the piano, though, wonderful for her, she seemed to hang back, and whispered to Maud.

"Nonsense, dear," replied Maud, "why, you never used to mind Mr. Gambier—sing, there's a good child." And Lily, who certainly never did mind Mr. Gambier, and who had only now felt a little shyness on account of his having been some time absent, seated herself, and began to play,

"Ye banks and braes o' bonny Doon ;"

and sang, increasing in courage as she went on, until she showed that she had fully gained her cousin's style of singing it, and finished it most beautifully, and in the spirit of true Scotch minstrelsy.

Mr. Hope was delighted. "You dear child," said he, "how glad I am that you have learned my favorite song ! Your dear mother used to sing the music of her native land so sweetly, and your voice grows so like hers, my Lily." But Lily again began with an arch face and merry tone to sing,

"Sic a wife as Willie had,"

and then followed it by,

"Will ye gang to the Hielands, Lizzy Lindsay?"

And sang one after another of Helen's exhaustless

store, and with such pathos or mirth, as the song required, that Mr. Hope, who had never heard her do so before, was quite amazed.

After many songs, and much approval from her pleased father, she rose, and crowding into the corner of Mr. Hope's chair she kissed him on his forehead and cheeks, as it was her habit to do when much delighted, and said, "There, daddy ; I knew you would miss your dear Scotch songs, and so I made Helen give me lessons, and tell me how to pronounce the words, and the meaning of them, and teach me the *way* of singing them ; and I can sing all her songs for you, papa, every one. I don't think there is one that I have not learned ; and it was all for you, my own dear papa. I mean never to sing one of them to any one but you and those to whom you particularly tell me to sing them."

"Thank you, my darling. I prize one accomplishment or art learned for family uses, and to please papa, far more than a dozen acquired for the purpose of gaining admiration?"

Lily's thoughts glanced back to the ambitious projects which had formerly possessed her mind, of doing something that might win her fame and notice ; and remembering her dear brother's advice on the subject, she became for a moment so much

absorbed in thought as to return no answer to her father's loving approval.

"Don't you think so yourself, dear?" he asked.

"I do, papa—*now*," she added, emphatically, for she deeply felt the precious privilege that it was to be able in any way to gratify such a father. "It certainly is better, much better, to please you, than to be praised by strangers; and I shall try and keep all my best things for you, and for Maud, and Everard, and all you home people, and try also not to care about being praised by outside people."

"But, Lily," asked Mr. Gambier, laughing, "I should like to know how you class me in this matter; do you mean me to be an 'outside' person, and never to try and please me?"

"No, Mr. Gambier, certainly not," said Lilies; "you never can be anything here but a *heart* person. You are one of the family, and just exactly the same as if you were my brother. I wish you were my brother, and then you would come and live with us. Wouldn't it be nice, papa?"

"Very, my dear," replied Mr. Hope. "But now, if you are not tired, sing one more of your new songs, and then I must go and write some letters before tea-time."

Another and yet another song was sung, and

Lily, exulting in the success of her little secret plan of pleasing her father, seemed as if she would never tire. Nothing could have been better timed ; and that, and the opportune return of Mr. Gambier, helped to make the whole party quite cheerful and bright—far more so than they had thought it possible they could be after parting with so many of their friends. Mr. Gambier heard all the details of the Scotch travellers' plans, and of Emily and Blanche having gone with them ; and then, as it was one of the evenings in which he gave a cottage lecture in a hamlet at the end of his parish, he was obliged to go, and left the party, declining to return that night, but promising to see them in the morning ; and the girls then sat down quietly to prepare some of Lily's lessons for the next day, when the studies which late events had much interrupted were to be steadily resumed.

XXXIII.

THE ANTICIPATED PARTY.

SOME weeks now passed on peacefully and very pleasantly. The girls at the Grange had less intercourse with the family at the Cottage than they had had before Mabel's departure, as Everard was absent at Oxford, and Meta had taken the opportunity of visiting some friends. Rosalie was very busy with her masters, preparing for them, receiving their lessons, and exerting herself in every way to obtain all the benefit she could from their attendance, so that she and Mrs. Evelyn were much occupied.

The families were, however, on the most affectionate terms, and often met; but it more usually happened that Maud and Lillas walked together alone, and were more occupied with their father and with each other than had been the case for many months past. In consequence of this close association, a degree of friendship now sprang up between the sisters that was most pleasing and interesting. Maud had always been as a mother to the little one;

but now Lily's growing intellect and expanding heart called forth a different feeling, and the fine, steady principle that began more and more to show itself in Liliás' conduct won the respect as well as the love of her sister. Lily, on her part, strongly felt the ennobling and satisfying pleasure that the affection and confidence of an elder (and that elder one such as Maud Hope was) bestows on the younger, and she was so deeply gratified by Maud's and her father's evidently increasing love for her, and by their seeming to like to make her their companion, and speaking to her as one who was trusted, that it seemed to elevate her character. Her love for Maud was intense, almost too vehement ; indeed, the child's whole being seemed to be full of love. Her father, Mr. Gambier, and Maud were all deep, *deep* in her young heart, and a word or hint that either was otherwise than perfect would have made Liliás fire up with indignation against him or her who should *dare* to make such an implication.

Their life was a very pleasant and quiet one. They rose early ; then Liliás went to her father for half an hour daily, during which time he read to her some portions of the Scriptures, commenting as he went on, and often conversing with her on the subject on which he had read. Then they went to the

library, where Maud and the servants joined them for family worship, after which followed breakfast ; after that Mr. Hope entered on his morning reading or writing, whilst the girls studied for two or three hours together, and then came the early dinner, after which Mr. Hope and his daughters either walked together or separately, as circumstances allowed, calling occasionally on friends and neighbors, or visiting the poor in their cottages. Once or twice in each week, Maud spent some hours at the village school, and on those occasions Lily frequently walked alone with her father, and often enjoyed one of her favorite rides with Mr. Gambier, as of old. Then in the gloaming there was singing, and very often Rose came in, and was there for the twilight hour, sometimes remaining to drink tea, and sometimes not, as might happen ; and Mr. Gambier too was often there, and bright and pleasant were the days as they thus glided calmly by.

But Easter drew near, and it became necessary to break the news of Mr. Gambier's projected departure to the little circle, of which he formed so important a part. At the first moment that Lilies heard of his purposed change of residence, she seemed entirely to sink under the intelligence, and gave way to a flood of tears and bitter lamentations

—a few words dictated by her old rebellious spirit escaped her, and she threw herself on the ground, as she used to do, and yielded to the impetuous course of her feelings without restraint ; but it was but for a few moments.

“Command yourself, my love,” said Mr. Hope ; “dear Lily, this is not right ; we are all as sorry to lose our friend as you can be, but if it pleases God to remove him from us for a time, we must try to consent to His will. Come, my child,” added he ; “get up and try to take this trial, for such indeed it is, in a more Christian spirit.”

In former days, Lilius would have sobbed and lamented herself but the more, had her father spoken thus to her ; but it was not so now. She rose gently, though still crying bitterly, kissed the hand that aided in raising her, which she would before-times have repulsed, and then left the room and went to her own little chamber.

After more than half an hour’s absence, she returned with a pale, sorrowful face indeed, but making strong efforts to be cheerful, and though her voice trembled when she spoke, and tears now and then started in her poor sightless eyes, she continued to make steady efforts to bear this new trouble properly, and succeeded so well, that when

her father asked if he was not to have a song, she was able to take her place at the piano, and sing until she had almost forgotten her grief.

Deeply did her father's whispered word of approval, as she kissed him and wished him good-night, at her early bed-hour, sink into her heart, but Mr. Gambier's "God bless you, my dear good little girl," had very nearly the opposite effect from that which he would have desired, for it made the tears, which had all the evening been lurking in a corner, rush down her cheeks, and she was obliged to make a hasty exit without completing her round of "good-nights."

After this evening Liliás bore up bravely ; she had seen her danger, and sought strength from "Him that is mighty," and now, with a mind set to accept this fresh deprivation in a cheerful spirit from His hand, she steadily looked the trial in the face, and found it (as we often do find trials when we have courage to do so), not nearly so distressing as in her first glimpse of the threatened evil she had thought it.

Her father and Maud, who entered fully into the child's sorrow, kindly suggested that she should ask Mr. Gambier to write to her, and Maud promised to be Lily's amanuensis and reader in the correspon-

dence. This was charming, and as her friend on their next meeting himself suggested the same plan, Lily was truly delighted. "And then in *one* year you will come back, and I shall still be a little girl then, you know, not fourteen, and the youngest is always a child much longer than the eldest."

"True, dear," replied Mr. Gambier; "and then I shall find you improved, and grown both in stature and in grace, God sparing us. I shall look on with earnest hope to the time when I shall once more see the dear places and friends that I leave, Lillas, and it will be so pleasant to meet again."

And Lily, with half tears and half smiles, quite agreed; and then, as it was resolved that they should make the most of the little time that was left them, they all set out for a walk to the village, to visit Mrs. Sutor and some other of their friends there, whilst Mr. Gambier paid attention to some parish duties, after which he was to return to the Grange for the rest of the evening.

The frequent letters which were received from Mabel and the Scotch party gave most satisfactory accounts of them and of their doings. They had visited Bath and London on their way to Scotland, and now had just arrived in Edinburgh, from a sojourn in which most interesting city Mabel was

promising herself much delight. Emily's letters to Liliás were highly amusing and graphic. She had never before been in any large town or city in England, and her observations were so intelligent and so freely and simply communicated, that they quite interested all the elders as well as Liliás herself. Lily's letters in reply were, of course, comparatively unsatisfactory, as the poor child was unable to write for herself, and did not find it very easy or pleasant to dictate, but Emily was true to her promise and her friend, and, not disheartened by the rather dry and short replies which she received, she failed not to keep Liliás well up to all their movements, and to give her some idea of most of the novelties which chiefly interested her sister and herself.

XXXIV.

A HEAVIER TRIAL.

HOW little do we know what lies before us !
How little did Lillas Hope think, when her spirits sunk under the thought of Mr. Gambier's now near departure, that a far deeper grief and anxiety would soon swallow up all her thoughts of it and him.

It was early in the afternoon of a most lovely day in April, that Mr. Hope being busy elsewhere, the two girls, Maud and Lillas, set out for a ramble on the sea-shore.

The cliffs which bound the coast of this part of Devonshire are very lofty, composed in some parts of red sandstone, and in others of limestone, which is extensively quarried and carried off for burning into lime. Through these latter run immense veins of very beautiful marble, interspersed with huge masses of fossil madrepores, from which, when cut and polished, chimney-pieces, tables, and other household ornaments of great beauty, are made. Below these cliffs lie little beaches formed of ex-

ceedingly white and very small shingle, and deeply rooted in them are very large boulders of variously colored marbles, which have from time to time fallen from the cliffs above, or been thrown out of the quarries as useless. The tints of these marbles, which are chiefly blue, yellow, and white, look very brilliant and beautiful when the waves have recently washed them and left them wet, and amongst the small stones which lie between, fine specimens of madrepores and sponges are found, and the searching for them forms one of the seaside amusements of the young people in the neighborhood.

It was on one of these little beaches that Maud and Liliás were amusing themselves on the afternoon of which we speak. Lily's delight was to throw stones into the water, that she might hear the deep plashing sound they made as they fell. Sometimes she made Maud place her on some safe spot where she might cast them from a distance above; at others she would try how far she could hurl them, judging of the distance she had thrown by the sound of the stone in its fall. They had been enjoying this sport for a considerable time, Neptune and Fata, who were with them, respectively occupying themselves, the one by dashing in after the first stone, and then swimming from one

spot to another as each succeeding missile sounded on the surface, and the other, by standing on the shore and barking vociferously, as it was her custom to do when Neptune was in the water. At last some object drew off Maud's attention, and both girls stood still, ceasing to throw stones, so that Neptune, finding his imaginary duties ended, began to swim ashore, and finally landed close to the feet of his young mistresses, and began most unceremoniously to shake his dripping locks over their dresses, utterly regardless of the heavy shower of salt water which he was thus inflicting on them.

Both girls laughingly scolded him, and with a sudden movement stepped backwards—Lilias in safety, but poor Maud, who had been standing in front of a large block of marble, low sunken in the beach, tripped against it, and fell backwards over it with considerable violence. Her exclamations of anguish alone informed Lily, who was still laughing, that any accident had occurred, but what it was she knew not, for Maud had seriously hurt herself, and lay on the ground in great suffering, and at first unable to speak.

“What is the matter? where are you, Maud?” exclaimed the terrified child. “Dear Maud, what

is it? What have you done?" But Maud had nearly fainted, and no answer could Liliás obtain. The little girl felt round her in the direction in which her sister had been standing, but on the ground, because the sound of the voice had shown her that Maud must have fallen, and soon she found the beloved object of her fears, and discovered by the touch that she was insensible. Was she dead? That was the child's first terrible thought; but Lily had considerable presence of mind, and remembered that it might be only faintness, so she began to chafe her temples and hands, and it was not long before Maud sighed, and began to recover consciousness, and soon she was able to speak, though with difficulty, for she had severely bruised herself in her fall, and her back gave her so much pain that she could with difficulty command herself. Her position was a very perilous one, and she soon became fully aware of it. She lay near the edge of the sea, it was just about low water, and spring tides, so that when the turn once began the water would, she knew, flow rapidly, and soon cover the place where she lay—all this suddenly rushed into her mind, and she remembered that her only companion was a blind child, and that a long piece of stony beach, a steep path up the side of the hill,

and half a mile of lane, was between her and any possibility of help.

For a few moments she was panic-stricken, and tried again and again to rise, or to draw herself further from the sea ; but the effort was vain—her limbs were useless, and she could do nothing. Then came thoughts of Him who is “a present help in trouble,” and she felt that He was near, and was calmed. With these thoughts came back to her her usual strong sense and judgment, and after a moment’s prayerful thought, she was able to reply to Lily’s often repeated entreaties to be told what to do.

“Go, darling, as fast as you can towards the village, but be careful not to fall, and as you go cry out, ‘*Help*,’ as loud as you can. People whom you cannot see may hear you, and, if you meet with any one, send him to me, and run on to papa, and ask him to come, and bring some one with a board, and some cushions, or a chair, or something to carry me ; and tell dear papa not to be frightened. But be as quick as possible, dearest.”

“But how shall I find my way, Maud ? I do not know which way I am standing, and there is nothing to feel by.”

“I have thought of that, dear ; untie my ribbon

from my hat, and fasten it to Nep, and he will lead you right."

In great trepidation, Liliás did as Maud bade her ; but a new difficulty arose—Neptune would not be induced to leave Maud. He lay down by her side, and said as plainly as a dog could say, "She must not be left here alone, *I* shall stay with *her*," and no persuasion or scolding could induce him to go one step.

"I know," exclaimed Liliás—"Fata shall lead me;" and hastily unfastening the ribbon from the resolute Neptune's neck, she tied it round Fata's, and kissing Maud passionately, with many fears, but with a praying heart, she began her journey. Happily for Lily, the idea of the approaching turn of the tide had not entered her mind, and Maud, though the terror of the idea was strongly oppressing her, wisely and kindly forbore to tell her, well knowing that the poor child would lose no time in doing all that lay in her power.

With her eyes fully open to the danger of her position, Maud lay there, awaiting the death that she feared was, humanly speaking, inevitable. She knew that even if all went on well, it must be a full half-hour before Liliás, with the difficulties she had to contend with, could reach the village, and more

time must yet elapse before any one could come to her succor. Then there was the great danger of the poor child being led aside from her path by the giddy little dog who was to act as her guide, or of her strength failing her under the excessive distress of her mind. She looked at her watch, and saw that it yet wanted about twenty minutes of low water, and then earnestly striving to withdraw her thoughts from outward things, she set herself to commune with her God, and to seek from Him calmness and confidence.

So she lay. Liliás meanwhile hurried onwards, shouting for help, but no one did she meet. Fata, who seemed to have some intuitive sense of the charge with which she was intrusted, guided her safely to the hill-path. Then she had the advantage of the bank to guide her, and a good wide road, and she pressed on against the steep hill with breathless haste, every now and then uttering aloud her cry of "Help! help!" and continually in her heart calling on Him who is "mighty to save" to deliver her dear sister. On she went, up the hill and through the lane, and happily at the end of it she met a neighbor, to whom she told her cause of alarm, and sent him on to Maud, whilst she still rushed on-

wards to seek her father and fulfil the rest of her directions.

Meanwhile poor Maud lay in heavy pain of body, and, notwithstanding all her efforts at composure, in considerable excitement of mind. She contrived with great pain to draw herself a little way further from the water, but it was not much, and she could do no more. She looked from time to time at her watch; and slowly as the minutes usually pass when we are in suffering and expectation, now they seemed to gallop. She heard the ripple of the waves as they broke on the pebbles becoming nearer and nearer, then she felt the spray dash on her face, and by little and little the cold waters came up round her.

But the very thing which had caused her fall now led to her safety. The great block of stone over which she had stumbled divided the waves as they came, and part rolled this way and part that as they broke against it, so that, the spot where she was, being a little raised, she remained longer above the water than she would otherwise have done, and though the flood flowed round her, it did not do more than wet her garments and her feet. Poor Neptune was miserable. He tried repeatedly to drag her up by her clothes, but the agony his pull-

ing caused her, obliged her to prevent it. Still she hoped, even as it were against hope; and not in vain.

Suddenly Neptune sprang away from her, howling and barking as dogs do when calling for help, and dashed into the water. He had heard voices, and towards them he went; for they proceeded from a boat that was passing not far from the beach, and towards it he swam most lustily. The action and voice of the dog drew the attention of those in the boat to the spot whence he came, and they discovered the light dress of some one lying as if unable to rise, and almost in the water. Pulling hastily to the shore, one of them jumped out, and, discovering the poor half-drowned girl's condition, he made his companions draw up the boat on the beach and come to his aid. There were four men on board, two of them sailors, the other two tradesmen from the town. There were also two women, the wife and sister of one of them. With much care they lifted the injured girl into their boat, and placed her on some sails, folded so as, with the boat's cushions and the passengers' cloaks, to make her a comfortable couch; and leaving one of their party to walk towards the village and inform Mr. Hope of his daughter's safety, and that she should be landed at

the quay, where a carriage could meet her, they sailed on their way, Maud with her heart full of thankfulness for her wonderful escape, and Neptune lying well satisfied by her side.

By the time that the man whom Liliás had sent, with another that he had picked up by the way, reached the beach, Maud had disappeared, and the spot where she had fallen was covered with deep water. In great alarm the men retraced their steps, and meeting Mr. Hope, who was hurrying to the shore, they gave him the terrible information that Maud was nowhere to be seen.

But the father's ready mind caught at the only gleam of hope. He knew that Neptune had remained with his mistress, and that he would not have left the ground, had it been, as the man feared, that she had been overtaken by the tide.

"The dog! where was the dog?" he asked hastily.

"I didn't see no dog, sir," was the reply. "Then Maud is safe," was Mr. Hope's inference: "some one has found out her position and taken her away." As he thought, he however hurried on to the shore, resolved to trust no eyes but his own; but long before he reached it, the man who had left the boat in which Maud was, to seek him, arrived with good news, and lifting up his heart in thankfulness to God,

he rapidly returned to the house, to relieve the fears of his child, as well as to get a conveyance prepared. Soon he and Liliast were on their way to the town, with nurse on the box of the carriage, to assist in whatever might be required for her young lady's needs. Mr. Hope called on his way for Dr. Graves, whom he happily found at home, and took him to the quay with him. It was but a few minutes they had to wait, before the boat was seen nearing the steps; they drew close up, and then one of the sailors and another of the party gently lifted Mand, and bore her up the steps, where her father and sister, with Dr. Graves, were ready to receive her.

They got her home with tolerable ease, and after she had been undressed, Dr. Graves examined into her state, and pronounced that the joint of the right knee was injured, and that the back had been so severely bruised and strained in the fall, that although he saw no reason to fear but that she would ultimately recover her powers, it must be a work of time and patience, and that she must be confined to her couch for many months, before the ligaments would recover their tone.

This communication was of course made only to Mr. Hope. "Time and patience, with God's bless-

ing, and a good constitution, will set up your dear sister again, my love," was the Doctor's reply to Lily's eager questioning; "and she must have good nursing too, my dear child; you must look after her yourself, and I expect to find you the best of little women and a pattern nurse. You know, I dare say, that nurses should be very watchful and careful; but perhaps you do not know that they should never ask their patients many questions, or worry them by wishing they were better, and wondering whether they ever will get well. Cheerfulness, Hope, and Patience, are the three little friends I should recommend to all young nurses, and above all, my love, *Faith*. You must never let *Faith* go out of the room, or lose sight of her for a moment, she is the best of all, and the other three will not live an hour after *Faith* is dead or gone to sleep."

"Yes, dear doctor," replied Lilies, hastily drying her tears, and striving to subdue her excitement. "I will do my very best; now tell me what I shall do first?"

"Why, you have done the first thing I should have recommended beautifully; I mean, mopped up the streams on those pale little cheeks. Now, take Miss Cheerfulness by the hand, and go and sit down by Maud's bed. She will not sleep just yet, nor at

all until she has relieved her mind by a little talk, so you may go and chat a little with her, till nurse tells you to go. She is just taking some broth, and after a while will have a composing draught, so you may sit with her till then. But remember, Lily," said he, calling her back as she was leaving the room, "you are to be very quiet and as dull as you can, and in no way to excite her."

And Lily, nodding acquiescence, hastened to her sister's room, and there, holding Maud's hand, and exerting herself to subdue all her impetuous and intense feelings, and to talk calmly and cheerfully, began a task which was many a long week before it was ended—a task which told mightily on the child's mind and character in after life.

XXXV.

THE NURSE AND COMFORTER.

MAUD'S illness took a most serious form. In consequence of the alarm she had undergone, and the long exposure to a rather cold air in wet clothes, she had not only to contend with the local injuries she had sustained, but also with severe fever, which set in during the night after her accident, and in the course of a few hours became so strong as to produce the most lively alarm in the minds of her medical attendants, for a surgeon had been called in to examine the injured joint, and now shared the attendance with Dr. Graves.

Mrs. Evelyn and her nieces were from home, having taken advantage of the children's absence to visit some friends in London, where Rosalie could receive masters with advantage. Mr. Hope was therefore left without the comfort that their presence would have afforded him.

Several times during the early stages of Maud's illness, he had decided on recalling Mabel, and had once even written a letter requesting her return ;

but he was highly averse from doing so, if it were possible to avoid it, and the letter was put aside. She was, of course, told of her sister's accident, and was most urgent to be allowed to return home, but as the distance was great, and no proper escort to be obtained, and as Mr Hope fondly anticipated that Maud would be so much better before her arrival as to make her coming unnecessary, he at last decided on not recalling her, at least for the present; and he and his little Liliás, with the important aid of nurse, undertook the task of attendance on the sick girl. It was good for Liliás, and most interesting was it to see how the child adapted herself to her new position. The habit of aiding herself by touch instead of sight, had long enabled her to do many things that in the earlier stages of her affliction she would have deemed impossible, and now she was able to take her turn with nurse and her father, in the duties of the sick-room, and could pour out and administer a medicine, or give her food to her dear patient, almost as well, though not quite so quickly, as if she had been able to see. With earnest entreaties she had begged her father to let her share the night watches as well as the day work, and as Maud seemed never so calm and easy as when her little sister was close by her, and

as Liliás was now in excellent health, he thought it better to comply with her wish. Maud loved to hear the low sweet voice that was so dear to her, softly repeating a text or two, or a verse of a hymn, close to her pillow, and not unfrequently late in the night, Lily's rich voice might be heard pouring out in low-breathed tones some sweet hymn of praise. In Maud's most restless moods, those harmonious tones, together with the holy and life-giving words that accompanied them, had almost always a power of soothing her that nothing else could supply; in-somuch that on one or two occasions Mr. Hope had been obliged to fetch Liliás from her bed in the middle of the night to sing to her sister, who had, in her delirium, entreated for it so earnestly that she could not otherwise be pacified.

It was a touching sight to see the blind child in her night-dress, wrapped in shawls, and seated on the bed of the fevered patient, her father sitting by, and then to mark the calming and quieting influence of the holy song, and see how the flush died away from Maud's cheek, and the eager searching eye was quieted, as the little minstrel proceeded with her strange task, until at last gentle slumber would sink down on her eyelids, and Liliás, suffering her song, as it were, to die away, was lifted in her

father's arms, and laid in her own little bed to sleep and dream of happy and blessed things, till morning summoned her to prayer and duty.

It was a holy season to all, and as Maud began to improve, and their great anxiety was removed, a very happy one. The days which Liliás had lived in the hourly contemplation of suffering, and with the solemn thoughts of death constantly before her, had wrought a great work in her. She had realized the immense idea of God's near presence in a measure to which she had never before attained, and the experience of that time had done for her more than months of her former life could have done. She loved God better; she felt also that she was more to her earthly father and to her beloved sister than she could ever have hoped or believed it possible she should be; she realized, too, the truth of Everard's words spoken long ago, and now her dreams and visions of doing great things to win the praise of men looked, as they were, vain and earthly, and they died out of her heart for ever. Lily now felt, that to do and to suffer cheerfully and faithfully, in her own proper sphere of life, that which hour by hour God appointed for her to do and to suffer, was to live to God and to honor Him. "Him that honoreth me, I will honor," says the

Lord, and the feeble blind child found during those silent hours, that it was indeed good for her thus to be. Often would she think over the words of that sweet hymn that so truly imbodyes the Christian's desires, and so wisely sets him in his right place.

"I would not have the restless will
That hurries to and fro,
Seeking some great thing to do,
Or secret thing to know ;
I would be treated as a child,
And guided where to go.

"Wherever in the world I am,
In whatsoe'er estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts
To keep and cultivate ;
And a work of lowly love to do
For the Lord on whom I wait.

"So I ask Thee for the daily strength,
To none that ask denied,
And a mind to blend with outward life,
While keeping at Thy side ;
CONTENT to fill a little space,
If THOU be glorified."

It was a little space indeed that she filled, but oh, how precious was it ! Liliás had found her " niche in life "—she was to be a *nurse*, a comforter. She had found out the secret of true sympathy, that of throwing self aside, of having.

“A mind at leisure from itself,
To soothe and sympathize.”

That was the great thing she was to do, the thing after which her heart had been yearning. She was to be important in the sick-room, to be important by her father's side, to cheer him with her singing, her loving cheerfulness; she was to be important to nurse,—for her new strong faith was the upholding and strengthening of the anxious spirit of the dear old friend who had held her own little form in infancy, and cherished her motherless childhood,—and to her brothers; to darling May she was important, for if *she*, Lily, had not been at home, May *must* have been fetched back, and Evra too, perhaps.

XXXVI.

PLEASURE IN NEW DUTIES.

VERARD was now gone to a quiet nook with a friend, to read and meditate, and prepare his heart for that solemn period of his life that was approaching, away from the excitements and interests which thronged around him at home. He had been at the Grange, for as soon as he heard of Maud's accident he had hurried home instantly, but now that she was recovering, and his father's mind more at ease, that kind father insisted on his returning to his studies, and Lily's heart had swelled with thankful pleasure when she heard him say—

“We shall get on bravely, my dear boy; my Lilius is a host in herself; I can never feel lonely whilst Muf flits about hither and thither. God bless my *good* child!” he added, drawing her into his arms and kissing her, and Lily could only hide her face on his breast to conceal the gush of joyful tears that suffused her face, until she recovered her usual calmness.

And what of Mr. Gambier? He was not gone,

and seldom a day passed without his spending a part of it with Mr. Hope; but Lily was but little with him. Maud was never left without one or other of them, and so when Mr. Gambier was with papa, Lily was in the sick-room. Nor did she desire that it should be otherwise. Occasionally Mr. Hope sent her to get her exercise either in walking or riding with Mr. Gambier, and greatly did she rejoice in the cheering, strengthening tone of her kind friend's conversation when it was so, but she was always restless when away from home, and eager to get back; so as soon as the prescribed hour was over, back she hastened, and off to her post, and then, ensconced in her nook by Maud's couch, she was no more to be seen until again sent for.

It was thus that the great trial of his final departure, to which she had looked forward with such dismay, was lightened to her. She had now such overwhelmingly interesting duties and employments that her occupied mind had no time to give to vain regrets, and she had also been so little with him of late, that when he really went, it was not to her that daily miss that it would under other circumstances have been; and so, although in truth loving her friend even better than before, when he left her she

felt it comparatively little, and settled down to her attendance on Maud and on her father with renewed ardor and delight.

Maud's recovery was slow, and even after her general health was somewhat restored, the injuries she had received required that she should be kept in a reclining position, and very quiet, so that many months elapsed before she was again able to take her usual place in the family. During these months Lilies became quite a nice little housekeeper. She kept the keys, gave out stores, and even made the tea, and, much to her delight, contrived to pour it out without throwing it over. She was so earnest in her desires to be useful, and now made it so much the object of her ambition to conquer all her difficulties, that she tried and practised different methods of doing things, by means of feeling and hearing, until success crowned her efforts; and she soon became almost as expert in the management of her cups and saucers, cream-jug and tea-pot, as if she could see. She had certainly indulgent friends to deal with, who did not become impatient when her attempts were not at once successful, for both Maud and her father were content to let the little blind child try again and again, and did not mind it or scold her, when at first she failed to hit the right

place for the tea-pot to stand on, and let the boiling water from the urn, that ought to have fallen into it, flow all over the table-cloth ; nor when she mistook the sugar-basin for a breakfast-cup, and poured the cream all over the sugar. They only laughed, and set her right, and in time all such mistakes ceased, and Lilius made and managed the tea almost as well as Maud could have done. She was certainly a little proud of her capabilities, and not seldom pleased herself with the delight it would be to see Mabel's surprise when she returned, or to make tea for dear Mr. Gambier when he came home again. " Papa and Maud must not tell them how nicely she had learned to manage." Lily's tea-making was her delight, and exhibited with the greatest excitement and enjoyment to Mrs. Evelyn, and Meta, and Rosalie, when they returned home ; and again to her own dear Evra, who was as well pleased as his little sister.

" Why, Lily, we shall have you famous at last !" he said laughingly ; " certainly your family and friends will be proud of you now. Do you remember your aspirations after greatness, Mufti ?"

" Yes, quite well. Evra," replied she, " but I am ashamed of all that now ; only I own I do like to overcome difficulties, and do things better than peo-

ple would expect, and I do like to hear people say, ‘What, *you* make tea!’ or, ‘*You* give out the stores!’—I should not have thought it possible.’”

“Yes, Muf, and if they add, ‘How clever you must be,’ then you like it better still—hey? is it not so?”

“Well, perhaps so,” said Lily, “and better still if I hear them just whisper to Maud or any one, ‘What a clever quick little thing that is,’”—and Lily laughed merrily at her own audacious admission, a laugh in which all joined.

XXXVII.

FAMILY CHANGES.

TWO years had passed away since the time of Mr. Gambier's departure, and he was still detained at his father's home, and obliged to be absent from his own. He had paid more than one short visit, of two or three days at a time, to his own parish, and Liliás had enjoyed his surprise and admiration when she exhibited her new acquirements, and still more enjoyed and rejoiced in the true and heartfelt approval which he yielded to the steady course of usefulness in which she had set out and made such progress.

Many things of family interest had happened in those two years. In the first place, Mabel had returned to her home, and with her Emily and Blanche. Much, very much, had happened to Mabel during her sojourn in the north. The first and happiest event was, that by God's infinite mercy she was now evincing, by her daily walk and conduct, that she was in truth become "a new creature in Christ Jesus." The second was, that Mabel had,

with the full sanction of her father and family, become engaged to an excellent man, a clergyman of the Episcopal Church in Scotland, a Mr. Donaldson; and soon after her return home her marriage took place, and she was, at the period at which we return to our story, quietly settled at her own home near Stirling, and living and walking in humble faith and active usefulness, without a thought beyond her husband and his parish, save such as visited her dear former home, and all its loved inmates. Mabel had visited the Grange once since her marriage, and had been half promised a visit from her father before long, and there was also a hope that if Maud, who was not yet quite strong, were able, she and Liliás would accompany him; if not, Lily could not be spared she was too important at home.

Everard and Meta were married also, and the happy occupants of a cottage not more than three or four miles from Coombhurst, in a village of which Everard held the curacy. They had one little one, and Liliás had held her at the font. "Liliás Gambier," she was called, and solemn and deep was the young aunt's love for the infant, for whose Christian guidance she had pledged herself at that most sacred ordinance. Little "Lilla," as she was called, was now about a year old, a sweet plaything and pet;

yet, young as she was, she had already cost her godmother many hours of thought, as, her eyes closed to the world without by her blindness, she pondered the future of her little charge, and built castles in the air for her benefit, and made weighty resolutions concerning the part in her education that was to fall to her own share.

Nugent had returned from his travels. His coming had been long delayed, and put off from time to time, but now he was at home, and greatly did his presence enhance the happiness of his father and sisters. His old friends, Meta and Rosalie, too, were well pleased to see the agreeable acquaintance of former days again, and Emily and Blanche did not fail to tell him of their first meeting with his sisters, and their guessing who they were by their likeness to him. Rosalie was now a woman grown, and a sweet creature she was, in mind and person. Emily and Lily were as dear friends as ever, and Blanche, now about eleven, was as busy with her studies, under the auspices of her aunt and Rosalie, as could be desired. Mr. Gambier was now soon expected to return to Coombhurst. His father had very lately died, and this event freed his son from the duties which had obliged him to leave his own

parish, and therefore as soon as his father's affairs were settled, he hoped to return.

In closing our summary of the events that had occurred in the little circle to which our tale belongs, we must not omit to state, that on the death of Mrs. Burton, which took place when the little twins were about fourteen, and left them alone in the world, Mr. Hope was induced, at Lily's earnest request, to take one of them into his household, with the intention of having her instructed in the duties of a lady's-maid under nurse's auspices, Mrs. Evelyn at the same time taking the other into her household, with a similar view, so that the children, although partially separated, were often together, and were well cared for.

They were both nice and promising girls, and Grace, the one who was at the Grange, gave, as they all hoped, evidence that the constant teaching and the faithful prayers of her young mistress had, by God's blessing, already begun to bear fruit, and that Christ was formed in her young heart. Grace's love for Liliás was deep and unvarying. She thought and spoke of her as one too good for earth, and there was nothing that the child would not do to show her devoted love to her young mistress.

And what was Liliás herself at fourteen? She

was the personification of health and vigor, in body, mind, and soul. Not beautiful ; some would perhaps have said, not pretty ; but though it might be so, there was something in her countenance, notwithstanding the want of expression in her eyes, that was most winning, and drew all hearts towards her. She had the same peculiar smile that so illuminated the features of both her father and her eldest brother—rapid, gleaming over the whole countenance in an instant, like a sunbeam on the sea, and then as it were condensing itself on her lips, where it hovered long before it quite faded away. She was active, and capable of much exercise, and a blooming freshness after walking or riding showed that she not only bore it well, but enjoyed it greatly. Her mind was full of well-directed, and well-sustained energy, and it was surprising how much she had learned to do, and how well and thoroughly she did all she undertook. She had clear, sound judgment, a cheerful and lively temperament, and her temper, once so vehement, was now in such complete subjection, that it was no trouble to her or to others. Mentally and spiritually she was in a healthy and sound state, and there was nothing morbid about her.

In the history of Lily's life we have seen, as it

were, the first separation from the block, the digging out from the quarry, and for a time we traced, stroke by stroke, the work that was to transform that rough and unhewn block—her natural character—into the full-formed and beautiful statue of “the perfect man”—“the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” We left her visibly forming into that image, and we shall find that the work has not stood still, that, chip by chip, bit by bit, angularities have been rounded off, the different members of the spiritual being formed and moulded, and the whole stature, if not *perfected*—as indeed it was not—yet so matured, so manifested, that none could doubt whether the once proud, selfish, and violent Liliās were “a new creature in Christ Jesus” or not.

Liliās was rather reserved than free in communication, and not disposed to speak much on spiritual subjects, unless quite in private, and to those who were the dearest and nearest, with whom she could hold sweet communion; or when she saw an opportunity of gently instilling into the mind of another some of those holy truths which were so precious to herself. At other times, and in society, she was the quiet, pleased listener when sacred subjects were discussed, but herself speaking but seldom, and when she did, with girlish timidity, and only on

occasions when she wished some subject more fully explained.

She was the joy of her family, and possessed the warmest love of all the servants, and the villagers, amongst whom she was a great favorite.

With the exception of a few short intervals, during which she had made little excursions with her family to visit friends, Lily had been all her life at home, and in that little nest were centered all her joys, all her pursuits. Her heart was overflowing with love, and all shared it, poor and rich, young and old; but its deepest influences and affections were poured out on her father, Maud, and Emily; for both Mabel and Everard, having their own separate interests, dear as they were to all, were of course less important in the home circle than those who always moved in it; and Nugent, who was now practising as a barrister, was so much from home, that although his visits were always a great delight, he was scarcely enough with them for his young sister to be quite the same with him as if he had lived at Coombhurst.

"What are you dreaming about, Lily?" said Emily one day to her friend; "you have been sitting on that seat for the last hour without moving. What have you in your mind?"

"How did you know I had been sitting here, Em?" asked Lily.

"Oh, I saw you from the window. I was reading to Maud, and did not like to stop, or I should have come out." (Emily was staying a few days at the Grange.) "Come now, tell me what you have been thinking about."

"Oh, I have been building castles in the air about the future," replied Lily, smiling; "thinking of how nice it will be to watch over dear papa as he grows older, and being always with him and dear Maud—unless Maud should marry indeed, which perhaps she will, and then I think Coombhurst would be too large for papa and me, and Nugent will have married, and we must let him come and live here with his wife and all his little children, and papa and I must go into another house close by—papa must build one. Oh, I have a picture in my mind of such a pretty cottage, all clothed with jasmines, and honeysuckles, and roses, and such sweet-scented flowers; with thrushes, and all sorts of singing birds around it, and some bees, and soft turf to walk on, and then I think Mabel or Meta will spare a nice little niece to come and stay with us, and keep us from feeling lonely. So then I place myself in fancy on a garden-seat, with dear papa by

my side, and the sunshine and the sweet scents and sounds around us, and this borrowed niece, and some nice young friend with her,—such a friend as you are to me, Em,—walking amongst the bees and flowers, and telling me about them, and chatting together. And then there will be kind friends who will come and read to us, and nice poor people, and little children for me to visit and talk to, and have at our house, and I shall have a singing class. Oh! I shall have plenty to do, and be so happy!”

“And suppose all this pretty cottage were to fall down all of a sudden some day, and some quite different kind of life be forced upon you?” said Emily, laughing.

“Well, so be it, if it please God,” replied Lily; “I build my castles, and I do not think it is wrong to do so; but I do not live in them, Em, so that if they did fall, the ruins would not fall on me and hurt me. My castles are like the ornamental buildings at Lord Corven’s—they look well from a distance, but the family do not live in them; and so, though they please the fancy whilst they stand, when they fall they do no harm, and are scarcely missed. I doubt not, Em, that I shall have a happy home of some kind whilst I live, and then you

know there is a mansion prepared for me, 'a house not made with hands,'—a family, of which I shall make one, whose peace and joy can never be interrupted."

A little more serious and confidential counsel followed, and then the young friends separated. Lilies, as is often the case with those who have lively imaginations, and are by any circumstance prevented from much communication with the outer world, was much given to dreaming and building "castles in the air," but the difference between her past and present state was, that of old her castles were of the most dull and unsatisfactory aspect, built under clouded skies, and withal, of a most uncomfortable character, inside and out, whereas now they were always cheerful and bright, and full of all sorts of animated and animating objects; and Lily said the truth when she said that she did not live in them. Of old, to give up a thing that she had expected and reckoned on, a thing which had formed the subject of her day-dreams, without being exceedingly vexed and showing very unpleasant traits of temper, was a thing out of the question; but now, self and its tributaries were in such a proper state of subordination, that if anything especially pleasant came to pass, she was joyous and thankful, always

referring it to the tender mercies of God ; and if what she had hoped for failed her, she was ready to accept the little trial cheerfully, and put her wishes aside, as if she had never formed them. Liliás had indeed learned, or nearly learned, the lesson she had been so long studying, that of accepting God's will in all its parts. Happy and peaceful state of mind ! Who would not rather feel, " My God and Father rules, and all that He does is right and full of love," and so be at rest even among billows, than possess that restless, eager spirit that will not be satisfied, that cries out in its petulant will, " Give, give, or I die ?"

XXXVIII.

THE VISIT TO MABEL.

ONE happy day during that enjoyable summer was crowned with a delightful event, which made it a marked day for ever. It was the day of Mr. Gambier's return to his home. How joyous were the greetings, we need not say. He was highly gratified at finding his little pupil and friend changed from the faulty passionate child into the useful valuable girl we have described—to see Everard and Meta with their sweet child, the family at the Cottage, the old friends in the parish. All were so glad to see him returned to them, and all so eager to welcome him, that his joy was really almost more than he could bear. But the highest pleasure of all was that which he enjoyed in the society of Mr. Hope and Maud, whose respective characters had gone on growing more and more in grace, and Maud's sweet intelligent mind ripening daily into higher degrees of intellectual attainment. She had always been beyond her years in judgment and thoughtfulness, and now the long time that she

had been confined to her couch had been well used, and the extensive course of reading which it had enabled her to follow out under her father's direction, and indeed in conjunction with him, had matured and ennobled her intellectual powers, so that when Mr. Gambier returned, he found one of his greatest pleasures in talking over his favorite authors with her. Time then went pleasantly and happily onward at the Grange. Mr. Gambier was even more there than of old. He conversed and read with Maud and her father, Lily being usually a pleased listener, and not unfrequently able to join in the conversation that went on. Everard and Meta, with their child, the sweet little Lilla, so called to distinguish her from her aunt Lillas, were often there, and fondly did Lily love the little sparkling child, who clung to her, and was never so happy as when on her knee, or toddling about the garden with her. She was a pretty little brunette, very slight and active, and remarkably quick and forward in speaking and understanding; and being the only child amongst so many grown-up people, the little lady stood some chance of being over-petted, and made to think too much of her own attractiveness.

Rose and Emily also were very often of the party,

and as warm a friendship subsisted between Maud and Rose, as between Liliás and Emily. Mrs. Evelyn was not very fond of leaving her own home, but she sometimes accompanied her young charges, and spent a day or an evening in the society of Mr. Hope and his family, with much enjoyment.

Pleasant days and weeks, and even months, passed on. Autumn followed summer, and winter came, and still all went on at the Grange much as we have described. Little Lilla had a tiny brother now to play with and admire, and Lily, now past fifteen, had found a new interest and delight in spending a few days at a time repeatedly at her brother's, where the garden and shrubbery were now to her as well known as those at Coombhurst, so that she was able to find her way about without help, or only with that of her little plaything and niece. It was very amusing to see the scrap of a child pretending to act as guide to her poor blind aunt. Lily's eyes were a subject of concern to Lilla. When she first began to speak, she would gently touch them, and say, "Eye, eye," and then point to her own. She could not, of course, take in the idea of blindness, and was constantly calling on Liliás to "Look, look, auntie," and when told that auntie could not see, the little creature would

exclaim, "No—eye. Auntie Lily not see. Why not, auntie? Lilla see pretty things. Auntie look, auntie see too."

Poor Lily! It was strange, but these baby remarks pained her more than any other allusion to her blindness. It was a new form of trial, and at first she felt it much, as almost a barrier between her mind and the opening intelligence of her darling little niece. But as time passed on, this little trouble died also; Lilla began to understand, and Lily not to mind, and as she had before felt the kind cares that met her feebleness in her childhood act as a counteracting influence, and become a pleasure that almost made her forget the pain, so now she found in the increasing love and tenderness of the little one, that which seemed to overcome the new-found sorrow. There was a sort of wondering pity in the baby child's demeanor, that was very interesting. Lily said "the angels taught it to her." However that may be, it was certain that the child's love for her blind aunt, and her delight in being with her, was most remarkable, and a source of deep delight to Lillias.

But changes will and must pass over the fairest scenes. Mabel now urgently claimed her father's promise of visiting her, and bringing both Maud

and Liliás, and it was decided that soon they should go, and that Lily should be left to pay a visit of some weeks to her sister. But before they started, a secret was communicated to Liliás, that half turned her head with rapture and joy—Mr. Gambier, her dear old friend, whom she had so long loved, was some day to be her brother! He was to marry Maud! It had not long been settled, but it was now agreed that their union should take place before the return of Christmas.

It was rather a damper to her joy that Maud would leave her home, but then it was but to another house in the same village, and they should continually meet, and almost live together. There was a great joy to Liliás in the thought, that if she had not overcome her sinful and foolish determination never to conquer the difficulties of her position, and had made no efforts to learn to be useful, she could certainly never have become her father's housekeeper. Had she been a burden to them all, instead of a really useful member of the family, how could Maud have borne to leave her father with such an anxious charge on his hands?

Both Mr. Hope and Maud said this to her, and when Mr. Gambier also said how glad he was to find that his little blind friend was so capable of

taking her sister's place in the household, so that he could claim his wife without a fear that he was taking her from her duty to her father, Lily's face brightened with joy, and her heart overflowed with thankfulness to "Him who had enabled her."

Our travellers' journey was a pleasant one, notwithstanding poor Lily's inability to see the different scenes through which they passed, for her father's conversation was at all times interesting, and now he made every effort in his power to make the hours pass agreeably.

It was his custom to enter into conversation with any one in the railroad carriages who might seem disposed to converse, and on this occasion several sensible and agreeable people journeyed, at intervals, with them, and the scientific and literary subjects discussed afforded much interest to both Maud and Lilius, so that the way seemed comparatively short. They slept at Derby, and the second day reached York, and so proceeded by easy stages to Stirling, where Mabel and her husband met them, and conducted them to their village home.

Mabel had matured into a most pleasing woman. Her girlish giddy manner, chastened by the influence of true religion, had become calm and gentle, and all the faults of her youth had in a great meas-

ure yielded to that same sanctifying influence. She was as affectionate and as candid as before, and now proudly displayed her three sweet children—one of them an infant about four or five months old—to her father and sister.

“O Lily, I wish you could *see* my little Margaret,” said she; “she is such a beauty.”

“But I cannot, May,” said Lily, cheerfully, “so you must describe her.”

“*I’ll* describe her, Lily,” said Mr. Hope, laughing; “she’s as brown a little gipsy as you could fancy—dark hair, dark eyes, dark skin, with a very handsome lace cap and ribbons on her head. Why, I thought that babies wore no caps now-a-days. May, how is it yours is so gay?”

“She wears it when I want her to look pretty, papa. She’s a beauty, Lily—you must not take papa’s account—she is more like a little Spanish princess than a gipsy, darling creature,” said the fond mother, warmly kissing her babe, and then, Maud having sufficiently admired her, she placed her in Lily’s arms. It was, indeed, a lovely child, and though, as grandpapa had said, dark as a little gipsy, was very like her mother. The other children were intelligent and engaging little creatures of a year and a half and three years old, and were

soon happily seated on grandpapa's knees, the eldest chattering away as fast as possible, though in rather unintelligible language, his infantine pronunciation being most amusingly mixed up with odd Scotch words and a Scotch accent that sounded very strange to English ears.

Mr. Hope remained a fortnight with his children, and then, leaving Lily and her little maid, Grace Burton, he, and Maud with him, proceeded to take a somewhat lengthened tour in the Highlands—a gratification which poor Lily's blindness would have prevented her from enjoying.

XXXIX.

THE SAD RETURN.

LILIAS, who had already found her place in the family, soon began to make her way into the cottages and form acquaintance with their inhabitants. At first, the broad Scotch dialect sorely puzzled her, but in learning her cousin's songs to sing to her father, she had already acquired many of the odd words she now met with in general use, and an aptitude for learning languages, together with her delicate ear, soon enabled her to understand the conversations of the cottars and their children. Grace, who was often her guide and companion, found it less easy to make out what was said by the Scotch peasants, but she could understand what her almost idolized young mistress said, though not what they replied, and the young girl delighted in going from house to house with Lily.

Weeks, and even months, thus passed on happily. Liliast went quietly and steadily onward, daily maturing in mind and body, and striving diligently to serve God cheerfully and thankfully in the position

in which He had placed her, and to accept the whole of His will concerning her with a ready mind and willing heart. At length the time arrived at which Liliás was to return home, and though sorrowing to part with Mabel and her husband, and to leave the sweet children and all the interests which had gathered round her, she nevertheless greatly rejoiced at the prospect of once more taking her place in the family circle, and again seeing her beloved father and sister, and entering on the occupations and duties which she felt to be more especially her own than those which had devolved on her in another place. Liliás had left her home in May, and now August was come, and Maud's marriage was to take place within a few weeks after Lily's return, and she longed to be with her beloved sister again. Mr. Hope had promised himself to fetch his child, and Maud, it was probable, would come with him.

The day on which Mr. Hope and Maud were expected set in with bleak winds and cold rain, more like November than August.

"How cold it is, Lily," remarked Mabel; "do not you think they would like fires in the bedrooms?"

"It is certainly a very different climate from

dear Devonshire," answered Lily, "and after travelling, I should think they would be glad to have them."

Mabel was well pleased that something yet remained for her to order and see to, for she and Lili-as had exhausted every other employment that was in any way connected with the comfort of the beloved friends whom they expected, and were not at all disposed to sit down to their usual occupations. The village was a good way from any station, so that they had not the comfort which in the present day usually attends the arrival of travellers, that of knowing exactly when they may be expected, and consequently they were continually on the watch, and mistaking every sound for that of wheels. It was getting late, when at last a carriage was seen approaching, and the whole family assembled at the window to watch its progress.

"Why, they have four horses, auntie," said little Evra. "How grand! I suppose they were in such a hurry to get here, that two would not have come fast enough."

"How very odd," said Lily; "I never knew papa travel with four horses."

"And there is no one looking out from the window," said Mabel, as the carriage drew near and

then stopped at the door. "O Lily!" added she, in a voice of terror, "it is only Williams; what can be the matter?"

It was indeed so. Williams only was in the carriage. Mr. Donaldson put back his wife and sister, who would have hastened out to the door with him, and went himself to ascertain the cause of the servant's appearing in the place of their expected friends, and then he learned that Mr. Hope had been suddenly taken with very alarming illness on the morning before that on which he had proposed to leave home.

The attack had been of the most serious character, and although he had improved a little, it had been decided by the medical attendants that Williams had better be sent off at once to fetch Lilies and Mabel, as their father's life was in most imminent danger. Other messengers had been despatched for Nugent and Everard, and Williams said that he had directed that the carriage that brought him from the station should wait to convey them thither to join the next train.

In distress that may well be imagined, for Mr. Hope was, as he deserved to be, most tenderly beloved by his children, Mabel and Lily made such hasty preparations as the time allowed, and as soon

as the horses had been refreshed, they, with Williams for their escort, (Mr. Donaldson being unable to accompany them,) were on their way to the far distant home which they were so anxious to reach.

Day and night they travelled, and being in time to meet an express train, by the evening of the next day they reached Coombhurst.

As the carriage stopped at the door of the Grange, Mr. Gambier met them, and relieved their minds in some measure by telling them that their beloved parent was better, decidedly better, although not as yet to be considered as out of danger.

Little had Lillas imagined when she left home, with what a comparatively indifferent feeling she should next receive the affectionate greeting of that dear and valued friend ; but now, her whole heart occupied with the one image of her perhaps dying father, she hastily returned his greeting, and feeling her way up the steps, found herself in the arms of her brother Nugent. Everard, he said, was with their father, and Maud, who had been up all night, had gone to lie down ; and then transferring her to the loving embrace of nurse, who waited to greet and comfort her long lost darling, he went to receive Mabel, and conduct her into the house.

“Nurse, is he really better ?” asked the weeping

girl; "do *you* think him better? Do you think that he will recover?"

"My dear love, 'tis in His hands that cannot do wrong. Surely hur's better, better nor hur was yesterday by a deal, that's sure and sartain; but hur's bad enough for all that. There now, don't 'ee take on so, my dear heart," said the old woman, sorrowfully, as she observed her darling's agitation; "hur's summat better, that's plain, for hur 'ave a tookt in a few broth twice to-day, and supped um in quite nice, hur did. 'Twere but very few, but that's more than hur 'ave a done afore since hur wer tookt. Now, my dear heart, you must not cry so; you mustn't do it, my dear. You do know what's happened is of God's good pleasure; and you mind how you used to say, when you was quite a little maid, 'Nursie, I'm a going to try to accept all God's will; not this bit and that bit, but all on't;' and that's what you'll do now, Miss Lily, I know you will. Papa has a kept on axing for 'ee to-and-agin, and you must keep quiet and be fit to go and see un when he next do ax for 'ee."

So talked the good old woman, reflecting back on her young teacher the lessons of submission and patience that she had imbibed from her, for Lilies' example and holy teaching had been greatly blessed

to nurse ; and the little child whom she had watched and tended from her motherless infancy, with care and love all but motherly, had been permitted to repay that care by leading the soul of her dear old nurse to that Saviour who was so precious to herself, and had had the joy of seeing her rejoicing in His finished work, and looking for salvation only to Him.

Nurse had conducted Liliass to her own room, where some refreshment was brought her. She was not allowed to go to her father until she had somewhat recovered her composure and he had also been prepared to see her ; but it was not long before Maud was in her sister's arms, and both together sought Mabel, who was in the library with Nugent and Mr. Gambier ; and here once more, all assembled, they knelt whilst Mr. Gambier returned thanks for them to Him who had brought the sisters safely through their journey, and with them besought God, if it might comport with His good pleasure, to spare their beloved friends a little longer to them.

Calmed and refreshed, they were now prepared to answer the summons to their father's bedside, which soon came. Liliass, though the youngest, was first called, as Mabel's marriage had made her

less one of the true home circle, and Mr. Hope yearned for his youngest and long absent child. As Lilius approached his bed and tenderly kissed him, her heart so overflowed with grief that it was with the greatest difficulty she restrained herself from expressing it; but she knew that her father must not be excited, and with a silent prayer for strength she sat down by him, and was able calmly and gently to speak to him of her journey and of other topics, and to subdue the agitation which had at first threatened to overcome her. Mabel was then introduced, and after a few minutes Maud called them both away, and made them retire and seek some rest after their long journey, promising that as soon as they were sufficiently recruited they should both take their full share in nursing their beloved father.

XL.

LILIAS THE NURSE AGAIN.

A LONG period of anxious watching followed the return of Liliās and Mabel. Mr. Hope's state was very precarious, for although decidedly better than he had been for the first few days of his illness, he did not make that progress toward recovery that his physician had hoped, and it was considered that his life was still in danger. All, humanly speaking, seemed to depend on perfect quiet of mind and body.

After the first day or two, a regular routine was established, each of his daughters taking it in turn to sit up with him at night, a servant being also in attendance. On Lily's nights, nurse always shared the watch, as, on account of her youth and her blindness, she needed the support of the experienced old woman more than either of her sisters. By day one of the sisters or brothers was always close to the pillow of the invalid; and never had father more tender nurses than those whose only contention it was who should take that precious and honored part.

But dear as they all were, none soothed his spirit or charmed away his restlessness so much as his little Lily : her soft calm voice in repeating passages of Scripture, her quick appreciation of what short text would be suitable to his immediate state of feeling, and her wide extent of Scriptural knowledge made her a most sweet and useful companion ; and she had always had a peculiar clearness of enunciation, both in speaking and singing, which made her words find more ready entrance into his ear, now a little deafened from the results of his attack, than others as low-toned could have done.

As time went on, and Mr. Hope gained ground, Liliias became more and more her father's especial nurse and companion, for Maud, never very strong, became ill, and was confined to her bed with an attack of low fever, brought on by the fatigue and anxiety which she had suffered during the early part of her father's illness, and Mabel took the place of nurse to her.

Everard was frequently called away by his home and parish duties, so that with two sick-rooms, and fewer helpers, all parties had their hands full of work.

Mr. Gambier was much with Mr. Hope. He was

as a son to him. His anxiety about Maud was considerable, but she was not considered in a dangerous state. Liliás and her friend were, of course, much associated in Mr. Hope's room, and great was his wonder and pleasure as he observed the easy and graceful movements of the little girl, and saw how quietly and readily she performed offices without sight, that many who have the full use of that faculty perform but awkwardly, so that she was even more useful in her blindness than many who have all their life long been able to see. This power of usefulness he well knew to result from principle, and he felt the source from which it sprung to be far more valuable than even the power itself. He saw and knew that her activity, her cheerfulness, her grace of manner, and her play of mind, all sprung from a heart taught of God, and dedicated to His service—that the talents He had given her were all devoted to *His* glory and cultivated for *His* use. And the affectionate pastor daily blessed God, that the little one whom he so dearly loved—his “little sister,” as he now called her—was such as she was.

Liliás had lost none of her love for him—her “brother Frank,” as she delighted to call him. Often did they talk over the peculiar circumstances of their first meeting; and not unfrequently the

different conversations that she had had with her kind and wise pastor in times long gone by, would recur to the mind of the little blind girl, as she sat and mused alone or talked with him or Maud. She loved to look back on the way by which she had been led, to remember the mercies she had received, and often would she speak of the fits of passionate anger, the self-will and pride, which had of old so sorely tried her and all around her, and wonder at the change that grace had made.

"I cannot think how I could behave so," she said one day; "I do not now even feel angry, at least not often, but in those days I do really think I could have killed any one who spoke to me when I was in a passion. I used to stamp and stamp, hoping I should stamp in the floor, and actually tore my clothes on purpose in my passion."

"‘Old things are passed away,’ Lily," replied he, "‘all things are become new.’ The ‘new creature in Christ Jesus’ must and ever will look back with wondering praise, and exclaim, ‘Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.’ Only God’s Spirit could thus have wrought in you, and blessed be His name for it."

XLI.

CONCLUSION.

WEEDS and months had passed away, and brought gradual changes to the family party at the Grange. Mr. Hope had gained much ground, but it was by slow degrees, and though now quite convalescent, he was as yet only just able to bear a short drive, or a turn or two on the terrace, at a time. He, however, sat much out of doors; and on a couch placed in a shaded but warm nook, in full view of the glorious sea and the lovely scenery that the grounds commanded, he might be often found for hours together, with his two girls close by him, Liliás usually busy with her knitting, and Maud by turns reading to her father and Liliás, and working and talking over the subject on which their book treated, or not unfrequently chatting about those personal and family matters which were at the time interesting them. Everard had been but little with them of late, Meta's confinement and the duties of his parish having called for his almost constant presence at home. Nugent had returned to

his professional occupations, and was now employed in the business of the circuit, and Vernon and Edward were, the one at Oxford, the other with a private tutor. Maud's marriage had been deferred on account of her father's illness, but Mr. Gambier was of course much at the Grange, and frequently made one of their evening circle.

It was a lovely afternoon in June when Mr. Hope and his daughters were seated in their accustomed place for the last time for a long season, for Dr. Graves had urgently pressed his patient to endeavor to confirm and strengthen his health by an entire change of scene and air, and although at all times reluctant to leave home, Mr. Hope had yielded to his wishes. He thought both girls would be the better for a change of air as well as himself, and it had been therefore decided that they should visit first the north of Devon, and then cross to Wales, visit Snowdon, Plinlimmon, and other North Wales attractions, and return through Westmoreland and Cumberland. The time of their absence was expected to extend to about three months, and soon after their return Maud's marriage was to take place. The whole party were rather sorrowful at the idea of leaving Coombhurst even for a short time. They all dearly loved their beautiful home, and each

one had special interests amongst the poor, and friends among the neighbors. Lillas, too, had her pets—her birds and her tame squirrel, and her favorite cat and kittens; and Maud her flowers, and other such home interests, which no one likes to leave; and above all there were the darling children, Lilla and Gambier, and the little new baby, whom it was very sad to part with.

Mr. Hope sat gazing half abstractedly on the lovely scene before him—the lights and shadows which flitted over the sea, and now brightened, now shadowed the beautiful wood and rocks that fringed the shore, and the fleet of little traders and fishing vessels which lay off Brixham, and hovered about the mouth of the bay.

At length his eye fell on Lillas, over whose expressive countenance flitted lights and shadows as changeful as those which varied the ocean's surface. He sat watching her for a time, Maud being quite absorbed in her own thoughts.

"What is it, Muf?" he asked after he had thus observed her for a considerable time.

Lillas started—"What is what, papa?" she asked.

"Why, darling," he replied, "I meant to ask what made your face just now as grave and still as a cloudy sea, and then flash up with that bright

light, as if a sunbeam had broken through and made it glow like a May morning? Come, child, tell us your thoughts. I am sure they are pleasant ones."

"He has 'led me by a way that I knew not,' father," replied she after a pause, and taking his hand and holding it between both her own. "I have been so sad sometimes of old, father, but now I can say, 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.' He has been my shelter, therefore I know He will be always so, and I shall never be so sad again."

"I thank God, my child," replied her father. "I have been sad too at times when thinking of you, my precious girl; but now I see and know that you are happy, that you can accept God's will and be satisfied, and my heart is at rest about you—God's name be praised," he added devoutly.

"Indeed I am happy, dearest father," said Lily. "How can I be otherwise? I have not a wish ungratified, or a desire unfulfilled. You are spared to us, papa—I had such fears about you. Now I have to think of all I am to do when we come back; and that amuses me so much, to plan about the housekeeping, and taking Maud's class, and walking with you—that will be the lame leading the blind, and the blind supporting the lame. Poor

papa ! I hope, however, you will not be always lame though."

Mr. Hope had suffered much since his illness, from some affection of the right leg, which made him need support, and Liliás, now tall and strong, delighted in being able to give him her arm. "Lean, father," she would say ; "you do not rest on me a bit—I love to feel you, and I am as strong as a tower."

"Not *one* wish ungratified, my child," said her father tenderly. "How is it now, Liliás, about the sight—can you indeed quite consent to God's will in that, and say that you have not a wish concerning that?"

Liliás pondered the subject deeply for a few minutes, and then replied gravely and solemnly :

"I think, papa, if I were once to let loose the rein, and allow the vain thoughts and wishes to rise, that perhaps they would spring up and soon get strong. But God helps me to cast down those things which would exalt themselves, and bring my thoughts 'into captivity to the obedience of Christ,' and He keeps me in 'perfect peace.' I trust now that I have indeed learned that 'our fellowship is with God and with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.'"



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